

The Havant Union Workhouse



The Havant Union Workhouse on the corner of West Street
and Union Road circa 1920

Robert West

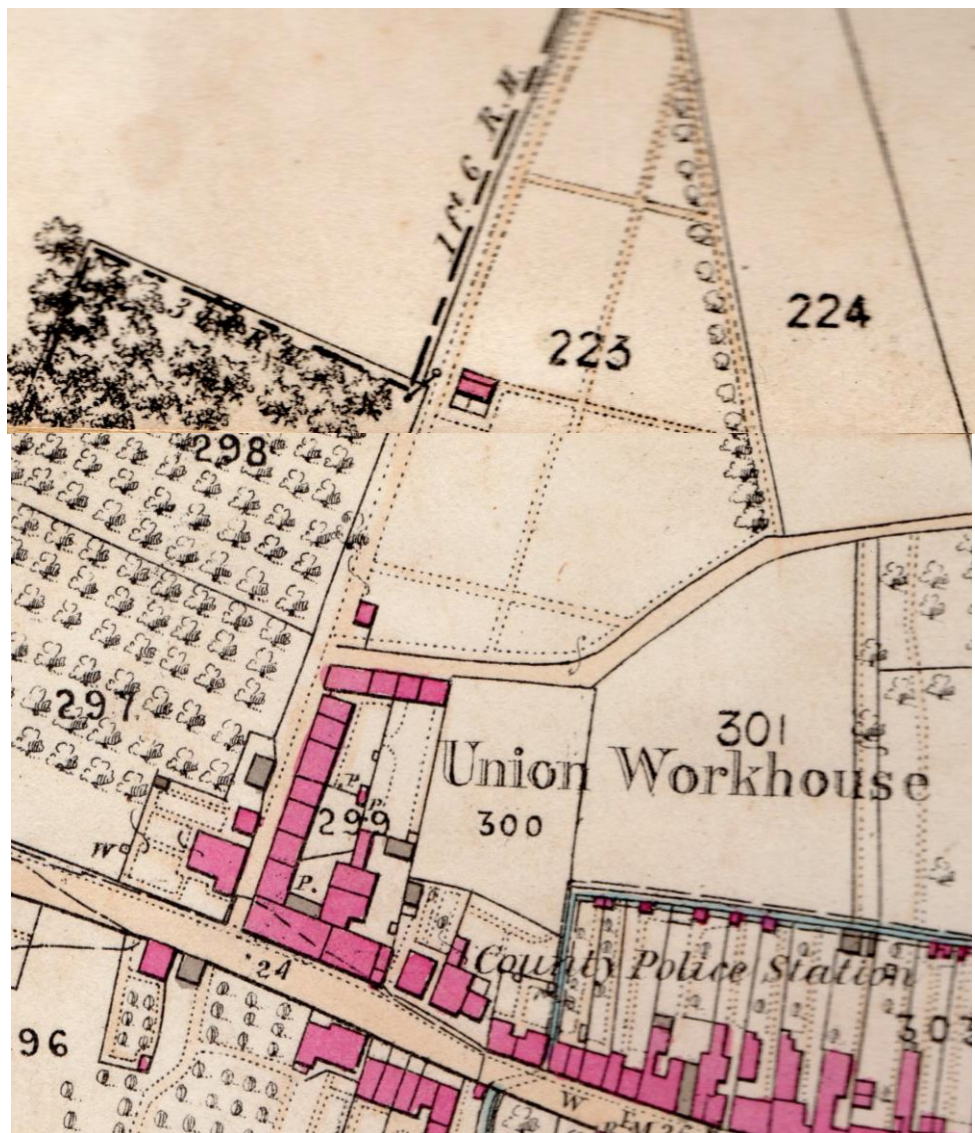
Havant History Booklet No. 46

Edited by Ralph Cousins, October 2015

THE
SPRING
ARTS & HERITAGE CENTRE

£5





This extract from the Ordnance Survey Map of about 1875 shows the extent of the workhouse buildings which covered plot 299 at the corner of Union Road and West Street. Plot 223 also was part of the grounds which were used as an allotment to grow their own vegetables. The building at the top appears to be a pigsty. The next building below is believed to be the mortuary.

The Workhouse before 1835.

We know very little about the early history of the Havant Workhouse. It was certainly in existence by 1776, when a national survey of overseers' statistics estimated it to have a capacity of 50, but it is unlikely to be significantly older than this. Although the Poor Law itself had been in force since 1601, parish workhouses – or, as they were sometimes called, poorhouses – did not become widely established until the middle of the 18th century.

However an Act of 1564 empowered parish officers to provide places to house the 'roaming beggar' so it is not impossible that there was a poorhouse in Havant from this date.

There was, strictly speaking, a distinction between a workhouse and a poorhouse. The former was a quasi-penal institution in which the able-bodied unemployed would be set to work, whilst the latter was a refuge of last resort for those incapable of working: infants, lunatics, the sick, disabled or elderly. The distinction was, however, almost invariably blurred, and was certainly so at Havant. They must both also be distinguished from almshouses, which were privately endowed charitable institutions, usually for elderly paupers. It is possible that, until at least the middle of the 19th century, there was an almshouse situated to the west of the workhouse in a field, known locally known as Almshouse Field, in the area where the Roman Catholic church is located, If it was here it would have been in the Bedhampton parish.

The earliest surviving account of the Havant Workhouse is to be found in the Parochial Report for the parish in the *Hampshire Repository* of 1801 (Vol. II p. 159):

The poor house is far from being an uncomfortable place, though I fear it is not kept under a judicious system, for the paupers are dissatisfied with their treatment and claim redress; there are about fifty paupers now residing in it, including aged people, women and children. There was a few years ago a manufactory of sacks carried on by such as were able to work, and it lessened the annual assessments; but of late it has been discontinued, to the detriment of the parish and encouragement of idleness; for at present but little work is done by any, save the children,

who are too young to evade the orders of the governor; the old men hang over the fire day by day, and study to avoid the most trifling labour. It has been the practice to admit women who have left their husbands, to expiate the crime of infidelity and debauchery, at a time when they were labouring under their diseases.

There are, however, some women employed in knitting and making up linen; the children sweep the street before the house and are initiated in a course of idleness which may attend them throughout life.

A few years later Walter Butler in his *Hundred of Bosmere* of 1817 (p. 50–51) described it as *a large old building* housing eight men, 12 women, 12 boys and 12 girls:

The boys and girls pick oakum, when any employment of this kind can be had; at other times go to farmer's work. The oldest boy, 14 years old, generally at service before that age: the oldest girl, 17 years old, but being a cripple, still remains in the house.

A person in the house employed to teach to the boys and girls to read, the usual number of hours every day.

The male and female inmates were segregated and a Master and Mistress were employed at a salary of £30 per annum with room and provisions and fire and candles. He also furnishes us with details of the inmates' extremely meagre diet: breakfast and supper were invariably bread, cheese and beer, whilst dinner was meat six days a week alternately hot and cold, except on Thursdays when it was yet more bread and cheese.

It is possible that shortly after this the workhouse was substantially expanded, or even that a completely new one was erected. Admittedly the only evidence for this comes from White's *Directory and History of Hampshire* for 1878 which simply states that a workhouse for the parish was built in 1819, but it is more than likely that some major work was done at this time. At the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 there was a huge increase in the number of unemployed and destitute all over the country, not least in south-east Hampshire where the economy relied heavily on the Royal Navy at Portsmouth. So the old workhouse, with its capacity of just 50 would surely have been inadequate.

But 16 years later it was expanded again, at a cost of £900, when it became the workhouse for the newly-created Havant Union.

The Workhouse, 1835 to 1856

The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 was the most fundamental reform of poor relief until the mid-20th century. The original Poor Law Act had, of course, undergone many amendments since 1601 but these were minor and piecemeal. By the second quarter of the 19th century, with a rapidly expanding population and increasing urbanisation and industrialisation, it was clear that a radical overhaul was needed.

The 1834 Act introduced two main innovations. Firstly, the amalgamation of parishes into unions for the purposes of poor relief, with all such matters now being taken out of the hands of the local Vestries. Thus the Havant Union (one of the 23 into which Hampshire was divided) comprised the six parishes of Havant itself, Warblington (which included Emsworth) North Hayling, South Hayling, Bedhampton and Farlington. There was, moreover, to be just one Workhouse Union, so the Havant Parish Workhouse became the Havant Union Workhouse and the other parish workhouses were closed down. This workhouse was to be run by a new body, the Board of Guardians, elected annually by ratepayers and answerable to a Poor Law Commission (later the Poor Law Board and later still the Local Government Board) in London, the first time that local government had ever been subjected to centralised supervision. The Havant Union, which came into being on 27 May 1835, had 14 Guardians; three from Havant, three from Warblington, one each from the other four parishes, and four ex-officio members, who were usually magistrates or Justices of the Peace. Elections, however, at least up to the 1860s, seem to have been rare with most candidates standing unopposed.

The second innovation was the abolition of all Outdoor Relief (i.e. payment in money or in kind) to the able-bodied poor. In particular there was to be an end to the so-called Speenhamland system. This had been instituted by the magistrates of Speenhamland in Berkshire in 1795 in response to the very high price of bread and had been widely adopted in the agricultural parishes of south and east England, where wages were especially low. It involved topping up the wages of labourers out of the Poor Rate, with the amount

dependent upon the price of bread and the size of the labourer's family, and its implementation had seen the cost of poor relief rise steadily. Expenditure upon this in Havant in 1785 had been about £425, but by 1813 it was £1,525 and must have increased substantially once more in the years of depression after 1815.

By the early 1830s it was universally agreed (at least by those in authority) that Speenhamland was an unmitigated evil which distorted the labour market, demoralised the labouring classes and placed an intolerable burden upon ratepayers. It had to go. Henceforth this class of pauper must only be relieved indoors, that is within the workhouse, and in order to ensure that as few people as possible would seek refuge there the new union workhouses were to be run upon the principles of Less Eligibility. In other words they were to be made less attractive than all but the most wretched conditions beyond their doors. But of course simply in terms of material living conditions this was impossible: in the workhouse you were at very least fed, clothed and kept warm and dry. So it had to be made unappealing in other ways, specifically through discipline, depersonalisation and regimentation. Every inmate was obliged to wear a workhouse uniform, few personal possessions were allowed, privacy of any kind was virtually non-existent and, if you were deemed fit to work, you had to form some repetitive manual task all day every day except Sunday. It was also a virtual prison for you could not come and go as you pleased.

But although in one respect the 1834 Act was a radical comprehensive piece of legislation, in another it was utterly deficient. The Royal Commission set up in 1832 to examine the workings of the old Poor Law, and whose recommendations the new Act largely adopted, had been obsessed with just one issue – Speenhamland; so although it had a great deal to say about able-bodied pauperism and the perceived idleness and moral depravity of much of the labouring population, it had virtually nothing to say about other types of pauperism, and the one recommendation that they did make in this respect – that there should be separate institutions for the able-bodied, the sick, the elderly and children – was ignored. Every union workhouse therefore became what was known as a General Mixed Workhouse in which all categories of pauper were herded together under the punitive *less eligibility*

regime. To be sure there was rigid segregation within the workhouse with no less than seven categories of pauper: able-bodied males, able-bodied females, infirm males, infirm females, boys aged seven to 15, girls aged seven to 15 and infants, but this classification was, to say the least, unsatisfactory. Families were split up and nursing mothers separated from their babies whilst the old, the sick, the disabled and the insane or mentally retarded were lumped together in the infirm wards.

Not surprisingly the new poor law was by no means universally welcomed. Indeed it was vigorously opposed on the one hand by Radicals, who saw it as an attempt to punish and stigmatise the poor, and on the other hand by Tories who feared that elected Boards of Guardians and state supervision would undermine the traditional powers and privileges of the landed gentry. Individual parish vestries could also feel aggrieved at their loss of powers, and this was certainly the case at Bedhampton where the minutes of the Vestry meetings in the years after 1835 reveal a sustained and vigorous hostility to the new union.

Thus the Havant Union Workhouse was a rather different institution to the parish workhouse it replaced. We get but few glimpses of the workings of the new regime from press reports, but they can be revealing. In December 1839 for example, Thomas Downton was committed to Gosport Bridewell for three months for absconding, whilst in March 1842 Elizabeth Brooks was given 14 days with hard labour for *refusing to perform work allotted to her in the workhouse*. The penal nature of the institution is also attested to by the appointment in July 1846 of an ex-prison warder from Parkhurst, Alfred Gunner, as the new master. He was, according to the *Hampshire Telegraph*:

The fourth appointment to a situation of this kind from Parkhurst Prison in the last nine months.

Finally, the strict moral regime can be illustrated by the press advertisement placed in August 1844 for a new schoolmistress who was required:

Not only to attend to the moral and religious training of the children, but to teach them industrious habits in order to them afterwards being useful domestic servants.

Havant was unusual, however, in providing any sort of education. A schoolmaster earning £25 per annum and a schoolmistress earning £20 per annum were employed up to the mid-1850s, although after this time the children were sent to local elementary schools. In 1851 the schoolmaster was Henry Holker, the brother of the mistress Mrs Fry, whilst the schoolmistress was a local 19-year-old girl named Amy Ide.

The censuses of 1841 and 1851 give us the only real information that we have about the inmates of the workhouse in this period. The 1841 census records 76 inmates, 32 male and 34 female, with just six aged seven or under and 11 aged 60 or over. At least three-quarters, therefore, would be deemed of working age, and the great majority of them, women as well as men, were classified as agricultural labourers. In one respect, of course, this is not surprising, but given that the census was conducted in early June, when employment on the land should have been plentiful, it might seem odd that so many of them were in the workhouse. 1841 however was a year of great hardship, and distress was widespread, in rural areas as well as industrial.

The census of 1851, taken at the end of March, records 92 inmates, 44 male and 48 female, with 13 aged seven or under and 16 aged 60 or over. About two-thirds, therefore, were of working age, and again agricultural labourers comprised by far the largest category of employment. Not surprisingly the great majority were born either within the boundaries of the Havant Union or not far beyond them, testifying to the fact that mobility, geographical as much as social, was very limited for the rural poor.

White's Directory (1859) (The first edition) records the following details of the union workhouse:

The Union Workhouse is at Havant, and was built for that parish in 1819, and enlarged after the formation of the union, so that it has now room for about 200 inmates, though it has seldom more than 150, and had only 92 in 1851, when the census was taken. The expenditure of the union in 1858 was about . £5,500, including salaries, &c, and upwards of £750 paid to county rates. Three Guardians are elected for each of the parishes of Havant and Warblington, and one for each of the other four parishes. They and four ex-officio guardians meet every alternate Tuesday; and John

Deverell, Esq., is the chairman. Charles Beare Longcroft, Esq., is the union clerk and superintendent registrar, and Mr. James and Mrs. Ann Weeks are master and matron of the Workhouse. Messrs. J. W. R. Baxter, Wm. Bannister, and Wm. Stedman, are the surgeons; Mr. Fdk. Cavell is the relieving officer and registrar of births and deaths; and Messrs. C. J. Longcroft and Charles Locke are registrars of marriages.

Sometime during this period just over 2½ acres of land to the north of the workhouse (where the fire station in Parkway is now located) was acquired as the workhouse garden. This must have been after 1842, for on the Tithe Map of that date this land is shown as pasture belonging to John Holland, but before 1856, for the surviving minutes of the Board of Guardians show no record of its purchase. It was used to grow vegetables, especially potatoes which were a large constituent of the inmates' diet. The Ordnance Survey map appears to show the sties in which the workhouse pigs were kept.

The Crisis of 1838/9

The new poor law had been introduced under the most favourable circumstances, for the years 1835 to 1837 all saw fine summers with abundant harvests. But the summer of 1838 was cool and wet, the harvest failed, and in the autumn the price of bread began to rise steeply. By the onset of winter it was as high as it had been for many a year and distress was widespread.

It was under these circumstances that, with even the newly-enlarged workhouse full, the Guardians of the Havant Union took the momentous decision in December 1838 to re-introduce the old Speenhamland Allowances. They were, perhaps, the only union in the country to do so, and their decision made not only the national press but also provincial newspapers as far afield as Manchester and Leeds. It provided valuable ammunition for the many opponents of the new poor law, but needless to say it also incurred the wrath of the Poor Law Commission and on 5 December their secretary, Edwin Chadwick, wrote to the Havant Guardians demanding to know why the allowances had been re-introduced. Fortunately both his letter and the Guardians' reply (from their clerk CB Longcroft) were printed in the *Hampshire Telegraph* of 17 December.

Chadwick's letter basically rehearsed all the old, familiar arguments against allowances, even asserting that they tended to:

Destroy the natural connection between master and servant and threaten the interruption of the social order.

Longcroft's reply, in essence, was that decisions like this were best taken locally by Guardians using their own judgement and not merely acting as *the blind and passive instrument of a superior power*.

There can be no doubt that the man behind this courageous defiance of the Poor Law Commission was the Board of Guardians' chairman John Barton. As early as July he had written a letter to the *Morning Chronicle* expressing the fear that the current harvest would be catastrophic and warning that *parts of the new poor law press with great and needless severity on the industrious and deserving poor*, whilst in November he had written to another national newspaper, *The Standard*, justifying the payment of allowances under certain circumstances.

But Barton was not just some local gentleman with a fondness for writing to the newspapers; he was an intellectual figure of some standing who wrote numerous pamphlets and articles upon a wide variety of topics including botany and philosophy, but perhaps his greatest area of expertise was economics. He had access to, and knew how to handle, economic statistics, and so was able to back up his arguments with facts and figures. He demonstrated, for example, that given the level of agricultural wages and the exorbitant price of bread it was quite impossible for a farm labourer in the Havant Union with a wife and more than two children not to starve without some form of relief. He must have been one of the very few Guardians in the land with the intellectual confidence and ability to stand up to the likes of the formidable Edwin Chadwick. It must be said, however, that he was neither a Radical nor a Tory but a laissez-faire Liberal who by and large supported the new poor law. But he was also a pragmatist.

Let us not trifle away the lives of the poor, he wrote in one of his letters, *upon mere surmising, or theoretical notions of political economy*.

Just how long the payment of allowances continued is not certain. What is

certain, however, is that the Poor Rate was increased substantially to finance them, for by January 1839, the *Hampshire Advertiser* was reporting that some 20 ratepayers from the Havant Union had been brought before the local magistrates for non-payment of rates, their defence being that they were themselves poor.

Some light is shed upon the way the workhouse itself was being run at this time by another letter to the *Hampshire Telegraph* of 4 March 1839. It was written by Francis Ommanney, vice-chair of the Strand Union in London and presumably related to Sir John Ommanney the naval commander and some time resident of Warblington House. It offered a robust defence of the Havant Guardians from accusations that the workhouse diet was *very meagre* and that a mere 1s. 4d. (7p) per week was being spent upon each inmate. Having inspected the workhouse himself one Sunday and seen the paupers dine upon a *wholesome* meal of meat, potatoes and bread, Ommanney was satisfied that it was *most creditable* in matters of cleanliness and conduct, and asserted that the real expenditure was 2s. 4½d. (12p) per-week per-inmate. His visit could scarcely have been any later than the end of February when the workhouse must have been at, or close to full capacity, but exactly how impartial his testimony is it is impossible to tell, for he was a fervent supporter of the new poor law.

One other interesting sidelight arises from this affair. In his letter to the Havant Guardians Chadwick had suggested that, if the workhouse really was full the destitute should at least earn their allowances by undertaking some sort of public works. Now the winter of 1838/9 was exceptionally wet and the Lavant stream flooded Havant. In January 1839 an emergency meeting of the local Vestry was held to discuss flood prevention measures, and although we do not know exactly what was decided we do know that a special one-off rate was levied to pay for them. One distinct possibility, however, is the digging of the Town Ditch, that branch of the Lavant which runs in a clearly artificial channel due west from Boys Brigade Gardens before turning at right angles to flow beneath West Street at what used to be Ruttle Bridge. Map evidence shows that it was created between 1833 and 1842 (previously this branch of the Lavant simply meandered towards Ruttle Bridge in a south-westerly direction) and so the most likely time for it to be dug has to be early

in 1839 by labourers who would have otherwise been in the workhouse had it not been full.

The Elisa Kill Affair

Readers of *The Times* for the 12 December 1850, or of the *Hampshire Telegraph* a few days later when the same report appeared word for word, would have been confronted with the following shocking story:

Attempt To Burn A Workhouse

One of the inmates of the Havant workhouse, in the county of Hants, has recently made an attempt to burn the union workhouse. This diabolical outrage, if successful, would in all probability have caused the death of several persons. The house, at the time of the attempted arson, contained, including the officials, upwards of 100 souls. The person who has been arrested for the offence is a girl named Elisa Kill, aged 17 years. She had been sent into the workhouse by her mother on account of incorrigible bad conduct, much against her inclination, and had been heard to utter threats in consequence she was locked in with the young girls, 25 in number, all junior to herself, from three years of age upwards. On the night of the 24th ult. some of the children observed that the room was lighted up and full of smoke, upon which an alarm was given; when the master entered the apartment he found one of the beds burning. The girl was speedily arrested. The escape of the children may be looked upon as little short of miraculous, as they were locked in, and, the house being very old, and having much timber in its composition, would have burnt like tinder. The chance – nay, the certainty is that had the house caught fire, all the children and many of the old and infirm must have been destroyed. A rigid inquiry being set in foot, it was found by the evidence of two of the children, one 12 and the other 13 years of age, that Elisa Kill was seen going from her own bed, setting fire with a lucifer-match to the bed of her half-brother, and afterwards retiring to her own. The girl had contrived to make a small heap of chips and shavings under the bed of her intended victim. On being searched, a one word brooch belonging to the schoolmistress was found upon her. She has been committed to Winchester

gaol to take her trial for the attempt to set fire to the workhouse, and for petty larceny.

The Times, 12 December 1850

When the case came to court, however, at the Winchester Assizes early in March 1851 it emerged that the fire had not been nearly as serious as the press report had insinuated. The fire had barely begun to smoulder before being rapidly extinguished and no one's life had been in the remotest danger. Moreover, although Elisa had certainly started the fire, the jury concluded that it had been nothing more than a malicious prank and there had been no intention of burning the workhouse down. Consequently they found her not guilty. Interestingly the charge of petty larceny seems to have been dropped.

This reflects well upon the jury, who were obviously unwilling to convict a young girl on a charge that would have led to severe punishment. (At the same Assizes a man called Grimes was convicted of attempting to burn down Parkhurst Prison and was sentenced to transportation for 15 years.) The same cannot be said, however, for the Havant Guardians, for there is little doubt that they deliberately exaggerated the seriousness of the incident in order to rid themselves of an obviously troublesome inmate. Also one of them must have fed the press that sensationalist, one-sided story which condemned her even before a trial had taken place.

But who was Elisa Kill? The 1851 census, conducted shortly after the trial, shows just five people of that name, but none 17 years of age or even close to it, and none living within the Havant Union area. There is, however, a 12-year-old (the daughter of a labourer) residing at Portsea. Moreover on the 1841 census this family was at Wymering, only just outside the Havant Union boundary. So this is the most plausible candidate for our Elisa Kill, and if she really was 12-years-old it would not only make the Guardians' conduct even more questionable but it would also clear up a couple of otherwise puzzling facts about the case. Firstly it would explain why she was in the young girls' dormitory, for the idea that, as an adult, she would be put there as a punishment is barely credible. There were well-established rules, laid down by the Poor Law Commission, for dealing with disobedient inmates, but they did not include removing adults to children's wards. Secondly whilst it is possible that a 12-year-old could be sent to the workhouse by their parents

because of *her incorrigible bad conduct* it is hard to believe that a 17-year-old could be dealt with in such a fashion.

Unfortunately if this 12-year-old girl really was the acquitted defendant she did not live long to enjoy her freedom for she died on 31 March, the very day after the 1851 census was conducted. perhaps the time she had spent on remand in Winchester gaol from the end of November to the beginning of March had taken its toll.

The Workhouse from 1856 to 1900

Sources: Minutes and Newspapers

The minutes of the meetings of the Havant Union Board of Guardians survive from June 1856 onwards. These meetings were held in the board room at the workhouse, and, until April 1857 took place weekly on Thursday afternoons. Thereafter they were held every fortnight.

The minutes were taken by the clerk, who also dealt with the Union's correspondence, legal affairs and accounts. It was a position which carried a significant salary (in 1880 it was £40 per annum) and throughout almost the entire 95 years of the Union's existence it was occupied by just three men, successive generations of the Longcroft family: Charles Beare until his death in 1859, then his son Charles John until his death in 1877, and finally Edward Roy until his retirement in 1928. They were all prominent Havant solicitors.

In one respect the minutes are of great value. They give us a good picture of administrative affairs and expenditure, but tell us very little about the day to day running of the workhouse and of course almost nothing about the lives and experiences of the inmates. Also only rarely do they hint at dissensions amongst the Guardians themselves. This particular deficiency, at least, is remedied after the press are finally allowed to report their meetings in November 1891. This was a long time after some other local Unions had taken this step, e.g. Portsea and Alverstoke, and four years later than the Havant Urban Sanitary Authority. On the other hand the Fareham Union did not open its doors to reporters until 1893.

Press coverage of the workhouse prior to this was patchy in the extreme,

confined mainly to court cases involving inmates. Once the press were allowed to report on meetings however we get a flavour, sometimes more than a flavour, of arguments amongst board members. And in the 1890s there were plenty of them. In October 1892 for example the headline 'Charges of Favouritism' a 'Scene' accompanied a report in the *Hampshire Telegraph* of an animated debate about workhouse tenders (see below), whilst in February 1893 it was 'Lively Proceedings' when an argument between the chairman, Francis Foster, and one of the Warblington Guardians, Joshua Mosdell, was recounted by the same publication in some detail. Mr Mosdell wanted to know why no architect other than AC Lewis had been considered to draw up plans for the new mortuary, to which Mr Foster replied that: *If the board was going to stick at a trifle like that the sooner they obtained a new chairman and a new set of officers the better*, and accused Mr Mosdell of acting from *individual motives*.

The Guardians must have been unhappy that so much of their hitherto private squabbling was now being made public and matters came to a head in May 1895 over the scandal surrounding the Union's Rate Collector, Arthur Wood, who had recently disappeared with just over £1,000 of the Union's funds. Reports of the meeting of 16 May, at which the matter was discussed at some length, were carried by all the local newspapers; the *Hampshire Telegraph*, *Portsmouth News* and *Hampshire Post*. But these last two had apparently revealed details that the Guardians had asked them to withhold, and consequently at their next Board meeting a motion that reporters from these newspapers be *excluded from meetings until further notice* was carried unanimously. The ban lasted almost a year and the *Hampshire Telegraph* must have stayed away in sympathy too, for no reports of Guardians' meetings were carried by them either during that period. Thereafter, however, apart from a rather fractious debate in May and June 1896 about vaccinations there were far fewer arguments or scandals for the press to seize upon. Indeed as the decade progressed coverage became, by and large, less comprehensive and meetings at which only routine matters were discussed were ignored altogether. Nevertheless newspapers from the late 1890s do still yield information that is not to be gleaned from the minutes.

Buildings

There is disappointingly little information about what the workhouse actually looked like, especially inside. No plans, drawings or written descriptions survive and the few photographs we have, which were taken in the early 20th century, show only the main facade along West Street. This has a rather homely, cottage-like appearance that is probably somewhat misleading.

The only clues to its plan are to be found in a succession of large-scale maps, commencing with the 1842 Tithe Map and continuing with the various editions of the Ordnance Survey 25-inch series. They reveal that it began as a rough F-shape with the main axis running along West Street and two shorter northwards projections. There were subsequent extensions to these two projections and another short extension running east-west along what is now Parkway.

The complex would have comprised the dormitories for various categories of inmate plus an infirmary, kitchen, bakehouse, dining hall, laundry, workshop, board room, master's office and accommodation for the master and matron and other residential staff. The only outbuildings were the short-lived isolation unit (see below) and the mortuary.

It is believed that the mortuary is the building shown on the western edge of the garden in the map on page 2, which was replaced in similar location in 1895. There is quite a sizeable structure also on the western side of the garden on the 1866 25 inch map – but before the garden land was acquired the mortuary must have been within the workhouse itself. Paupers were buried in unmarked graves. Some larger workhouses had their own graveyards but at Havant bodies would have been interred in the Union's various public cemeteries. The new mortuary, which included a dissection room for autopsies, was erected at a cost of £158. The old one seems to have been less than adequate for in 1888, at an inquest on one of the inmates it was reported that:

The offensive smell at the workhouse mortuary elicited expressions from the jury that it should be properly ventilated.

But the new one, however well it may have been designed, was still without a mains water supply, a state of affairs that was to continue for many years. Before this time water would have been obtained from wells the locations of which are indicated by the three letter 'Ps' for pump on the map.

Like the rest of Havant mains water came to the workhouse in 1871, but this seems to have been one of the few substantial improvements for most of the 19th century. Apart from various special projects like new casual wards, mortuary and isolation unit very little seems to have been done, and in 1885 it was even reported that parts of what were termed the *old building* were structurally unsound. It was not until about 1894 that a significant programme of renovation and extension took place, invariably in response to various recommendations made by the Local Government Board Inspector, Baldwin Fleming, in his annual reports. This was completed by 1901, when a new infirmary and lying-in wards were constructed and improvements made to the laundry.

Tenders

Although they kept pigs and had a large kitchen garden the workhouse still needed to buy in significant quantities of food and other provisions, principally beef, mutton, tea, sugar, milk, beer, oatmeal, flour (or bread when there was no resident baker), butter, cheese, soap, coal and candles. Contracts to supply these provisions, which lasted for six months, were certainly worth obtaining for there were rarely fewer than 60 inmates and sometimes in excess of 100 and annual expenditure on basic items alone was in the region of £1,500 to £2,000. But it is noticeable that, by and large, the same suppliers were chosen again and again. George Whicher, for example, was almost the sole provider of beef and mutton for some 30 years from the mid-1860s onwards and earned about £160 per annum from his workhouse contracts. Besides these regular tenders there were occasional maintenance or improvement works required, which ranged from whitewashing the walls for just a few pounds to more major building work costing hundreds.

Havant Union

THE BOARD of GUARDIANS of this UNION, are desirous of receiving Tenders for the supply following ARTICLES, for two calendar months, from the 27th day of June instant.

Beef, Sticking Pieces, Shoulder, Clods, and Necks at per stone.

Beef, Shin and Legs at per lb.

Mutton, Fore Quarters at per quarter.

Bread, Best wheaten in 2lb.

Loaves at per dozen.

Flour, The Best at per cwt.

Cheese, Somerset, Gloucester, at per cwt.

Oatmeal, Sweet at per cwt.

Bacon, In Sides. Singed.

Potatoes, at per cwt.

Soap, Yellow at per cwt.

Candles, at per dozen.

Butter, Salt of good quality at per cwt.

Coals, Specifying the quality at per chaldron.

Milk, New at per gallon.

The above Articles to be delivered in mean proportions, at such times, and at such places within the Union, as the Board of Guardians shall direct.

Tenders to be delivered sealed and directed To the Chairman of the Union, at the workhouse office by ten o'clock on Tuesday the 23rd day of June instant, at which Union and place the persons tendering, or persons on their behalf, must attend. The power of accepting or rejecting any Tender to be absolute.

By Order of the Board, CHAS. B. LONGCROFT, Clerk to the Workhouse.

Copy of the blank document sent to those who wished to tender for the supply of provisions to the Havant Union. Tenderers would be required to indicate the prices at which they were prepared to supply.

Again successful applicants were almost invariably drawn from a fairly narrow number of tradesmen and craftsmen, the Stallard family, for example, being frequently employed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Because virtually all of these people were local men, and because there were so many close connections, family, social and business between them and the Guardians, the potential for cronyism or nepotism was ever-present. Indeed in October 1892 this was precisely the charge levelled against the Tendering Sub-Committee by Joshua Mosdell when it was revealed that the contract to supply coal had been awarded to Samuel Clarke even though a rival tender had been 1d. ($\frac{1}{2}$ p) per ton cheaper. The whole question of tenders was then hotly debated over the next few months. Did the Guardians have an obligation always to accept the lowest tender? Should tenders for basic perishable items be accepted from suppliers outside the Union's boundaries? Should tenders be considered by the whole board and not just a three man sub-committee? Finally should (as Mr. Mosdell proposed) all tenders be considered anonymously, with numbers replacing names? But in answer to all these questions the majority decision of the board was *no*, leaving the policy on the issuing and accepting of tenders fundamentally unchanged.

Master and Matron

The master and matron, who were invariably a married couple, were in charge of the day to day running of the workhouse. They were, it is true, answerable to the Board of Guardians, to whom the master had to report at each of their meetings, and the house itself was subject to regular inspections by the Visiting Committee as well as an annual inspection by a Local Government Board official. But as far as the inmates were concerned their authority was absolute and to disobey the orders of a master could be a criminal offence. In 1890 for example the Havant magistrates sentenced inmate Henry Rogers to seven days imprisonment with hard labour for repeatedly refusing to wash some vegetables taken from the workhouse garden. He was 67 years old.

In 1856 the master and matron were Edward and Mary Ann Fry, who had been in their posts for nine years. In March 1857 however they resigned following allegations, which were never substantiated, that Mrs Fry had 'ill-

used' some of the young girls in her charge.

It was not until August that their replacements, James and Ann Weeks were appointed, but quite how the Guardians came to choose them is not clear. They were most certainly not from the usual background of such appointees, for workhouse masters at this date were frequently drawn from the ranks of ex-policemen, soldiers or prison officers. James Weeks on the other hand had, certainly until 1854, been a grocer and tea dealer at Ryde on the Isle of Wight. Moreover neither he nor his wife had any apparent experience of poor law administration or any connections with the Havant area.

During their stay at Havant James acquired both land and property, including a fine house in Tower Street, Emsworth. He also became a director of the Havant Gas Company and was an enthusiastic Freemason who was, for a while, Grand Master of the local lodge. From 1860 he was also Registrar of Births, Marriages and Deaths and later became (most unusually) the Union's Relieving Officer as well, each post earning him an additional salary on top of his £70 per annum as Workhouse Master.

It must have been rare indeed for a Workhouse Master to become such a prominent and well-connected member of the local community.

Mr and Mrs Weeks eventually retired in 1881 and during the 24 years they were in charge never seem to have had anything but the most cordial relations with the board. Indeed upon their retirement the Guardians granted James a pension of £50 per annum and Ann £30 per annum, though they scarcely seem to have been in great need of it.

The new master and matron, Henry and Ellen Cox, resigned (for reasons unknown) just a couple of months after their appointment, and in their place the Guardians selected Alfred and Mary Collins, who had been the master and matron of the New Alresford Workhouse. It was not a happy choice. By June 1882, when they had only been in their posts for eight months, the Visiting Committee had already issued a report commenting unfavourably on their conduct, although at a special meeting, held in July, a motion to dismiss them was defeated by eight votes to five. In November however the clerk was instructed to write to the Local Government Board:

Upon the question as to the right of a Guardian to go over the house at any time by himself, and the power to order a master out of a room,

which was clearly a sign that all was not well. But before the Local Government Board could give their ruling Mr and Mrs Collins tendered their resignations on 14 December and left without serving the one-month notice to which they were entitled. At the next board meeting, a fortnight later, a motion praising Mr and Mrs Collins and proposing that they be granted a testimonial was defeated, but only narrowly, indicating that the board were by no means unanimous on the matter. Even without references they found another position almost immediately as master and matron of Richmond Workhouse, Surrey.

Shortly after their departure a brief article appeared in the *Hampshire Telegraph* praising the Collins' running of the workhouse, claiming that *they have effected several judicious reforms of the institution*. A week later a letter, signed 'Justice for All' was published in the same paper. It, too, praised Mr and Mrs Collins and stated bluntly that they had been forced to resign:

Almost entirely on the account of the continuous harassing and annoyance to which they have been subjected by two or three members of the Board of Guardians, who have found fault with almost everything they have done, and have gone prying about the workhouse at all hours endeavouring to find cause for complaint.

But, 'Justice for All' concluded, the real reason for this harassment was that Mrs Collins was a practising Roman Catholic.

This, perhaps, throws a little light upon sectarian tensions at this time. In the early summer of 1882 a campaign of violence by Irish Republicans was initiated, their most notorious act being the Phoenix Park murders in June, when the Secretary of State for Ireland was stabbed to death in Dublin. This led to a great deal of anti-Irish, and anti-Catholic, feeling throughout the land, and it does indeed seem that Mary Collins was Irish. (Ireland is given as her birthplace on the 1891 census, though in 1881 it is London). Moreover mention must also be made of another local incident which took place on 6 December, just a week before the Collins' resignation. In order to celebrate the establishment of a telegraph office at Waterlooville it was decided to hold

a fancy dress parade, followed by a fireworks display and a bonfire, and upon this bonfire an effigy was burned. This was a figure in clerical dress standing in a mock pulpit bearing the words 'Another Churchman off to Rome'. A great cheer erupted when it finally caught alight.

In the Collins' place John and Grace Horril were appointed, and their 15 year tenure, like that of James and Ann Weeks, was trouble-free. But after their departure at the end of 1897 another period of instability ensued. Their replacements, Sidney and Grace Pullin, stayed for only two years before leaving to run the workhouse at Newton Abbott, whilst their successors, William and Isabella Dunn, lasted only from September to November 1900. They had come from Shepton Mallet Workhouse after resigning, so they had said *in consequence of some unpleasantness with the nurse there*. But after *lengthy correspondence* with Shepton Mallet the Havant Guardians clearly had misgivings about the Dunns' version of events and more or less forced their resignation. In their place they appointed Henry and Aurelia Ripp, who had previously been at the South Metropolitan District School, Sutton, Surrey, (See Church's Illustrated Sutton with street directory [etc.] 1880) an institution to train pauper children for industrial pursuits. They were to remain for almost 30 years.

Porter

The Porter's job was to ensure that no unauthorised persons entered or left the workhouse and that no illicit items, such as alcohol or tobacco, were smuggled in. He also locked the gates every evening at nine o'clock and unlocked them again at seven o'clock the next morning. He was, therefore, the official with the most contact with the outside world, and as such tended to be an unpopular figure. This, coupled with the long hours and the fact that only relatively young, unmarried men were considered suitable candidates, meant that the post was often a difficult one to fill.

This was certainly the case at Havant, where the job of porter was combined with that of baker at a salary of £20, later rising to £25, per year.

In June 1856 the workhouse did not have a regular porter, and one was not found until November when Joseph Broomfield was appointed.

Just four months later however he was dismissed for unspecified offences, whether by coincidence or not at exactly the same time as the resignation of Mr and Mrs Fry. He was replaced by a man called Brownjohn, but in October 1858 he left suddenly. The reason for his swift departure became clear the following January when one of the inmates, Mary Bennett, gave birth to an illegitimate child and it soon transpired that Brownjohn was the father.

By now the Guardians had come to the conclusion that a full-time salaried porter was unnecessary and the role was filled, at least for a time, by one of the inmates, a 14-year-old boy. When this came to the attention of the Poor Law Board they were most displeased and reprimanded the Guardians severely, but it was not until March 1861 that they even got round to advertising the post and when they did they received just a single reply, from one Richard Miles. Miles was taken on, but he too soon departed and for the next few years the post was held by a succession of men, all for just short terms, with lengthy gaps between the departure of one and the arrival of the next. Things improved after 1870 with first Thomas Cutler and then Henry Voller each remaining for several years. But when Voller resigned in 1881 more problems ensued. His successor, William Wall, lasted just a few months, and when his successor, William Chilcott, was recruited from Sturminster Newton Workhouse in October 1882 a letter was soon received from the Local Government Board withholding their approval of his appointment *pending an inquiry by them into his conduct at Sturminster Newton*. When this inquiry confirmed that Chilcott's conduct had indeed been far from exemplary he was removed from his post. Two more short-term appointments ensued, and although the next, Willett, remained for four years he too was forced to resign in September 1888 following the master's complaints about his conduct. James Reeves succeeded him, but by July 1890 the Local Government Board was ordering an inquiry into his conduct after the master had complained of *irregularities* on his part. He was replaced in April 1891 by Jesse Holman, who lasted for a hitherto unprecedented eight years, and although his successor, William Waldron, did not stay long, his replacement, Samuel Bennett, was to remain for a full 20 years. By the turn of the century, at least, it seems that the job of porter at the Havant Workhouse had become a less undesirable one.

Inmates and Workhouse Life

It was often stated that the workhouse had a capacity of 200 but this must surely be an exaggeration, for only rarely did the number of inmates approach 120 and was usually about 60 to 80 in the summer months and 90 to 110 in the winter.

An analysis of the census returns of 1861 to 1901 shows that as regards the former occupations of the inmates the number of males classed as agricultural labourers declined whilst the number of general labourers, as well as followers of such trades as tailor, shoemaker, baker and bricklayer, rose. The great majority of females were either housewives or domestic servants. There was also a consistently high number of elderly inmates: many over 70, not a few over 80, and even one or two over 90. Finally we may note that, even by 1901, the great majority had been born locally.

The daily life of the inmates was rigidly structured, with the workhouse bell being rung to announce each new phase. It was rung as a signal for the inmates to rise at 7 a.m. half an hour after which the master would conduct a roll call. It was rung to announce meal times and at the start and cessation of work for the able-bodied. Finally it was rung as a signal for everyone to retire for the night. (The bell can be seen at Havant Museum. It is the only item of workhouse furniture or fittings known to have survived.)

The principal labour task, at least for the men, was picking oakum. (Oakum was the fibre obtained by unpicking old rope and was used for caulking, to make wooden ships watertight.) It was dull, arduous work which made the fingers sore. It was very commonly prescribed in workhouses and was also frequently given to convicts. In 1898 it was deemed that the Havant inmates must pick at least four pounds weight per day. Some of the men, however, would have been employed in the garden, whilst most of the women would have been detailed to assist with the running of the house by washing, cooking and cleaning. Some of the women would also have been required to do needlework. Indeed for a time, in the 1850s and 60s, all of the uniforms and other items of inmates' clothing were made up in the workhouse out of rolls of cloth, mainly fustian and calico, bought in on tender from local drapers. Later clothing was bought in ready-made but one needlework task

that was required after 1892 was the sewing of shrouds for inmates who had died in the workhouse.

Sunday was the only day of the week upon which work was not required. On Sunday morning there would invariably be a religious service conducted by a Chaplain (appointed by the Guardians) in the dining hall. The rest of the day would be spent in enforced idleness. Books and magazines were occasionally donated for the inmates' use, but such reading matter is unlikely to have been greatly stimulating and there would have been little else in the form of recreation on offer. The children were, however, weather permitting, taken out for a walk.

The only other days on which work was suspended were Christmas Day and 'special' occasions such as Queen Victoria's Golden and Diamond Jubilees. Christmas Day celebrations, at least in the 1890s, consisted of a dinner of roast beef and plum pudding, the distribution of gifts, donated by Sir Frederick Fitzwygram and his wife among others, and a party. A few days later there would be some sort of treat for the children such as a visit to the circus or pantomime.

The children also had an annual summer outing. In the early years this was often to Leigh Park whilst in the 1860s and 70s it was to Purbrook Park, the seat of the then chairman of the Board of Guardians, Sir John Deverell. In later years it was more usually a trip to the beach at Hayling.

By the late 1890s life in the workhouse was becoming a little less austere and regimented. The wearing of uniforms was discontinued, greater freedom of movement, at least for 'deserving' inmates, was permitted, and rations of tobacco and snuff were granted for the men. But the principle of Less Eligibility still prevailed, and the Workhouse remained a place designed to deter as many as possible from entering its doors.

Vagrants (Persons without a Home or Job)

Vagrants, or tramps, were always a problem for the Poor Law. Under the Settlement Act every pauper was deemed to 'belong' to just one parish – if they had no permanent place of residence this was the parish in which they had been born – and was entitled to obtain relief in that parish only. But this

legislation, together with other punitive measures such as the Vagrancy Act of 1824, had done nothing to curb the number of people, vaguely estimated in the early 19th century at 20 to 30,000, who wandered the country living a hand-to-mouth existence.

Nor did the new poor law improve matters. The 1834 Act ignored vagrancy altogether, and it was not until 1837 that union workhouses were obliged to provide overnight accommodation for them, whenever possible in separate casual wards. All this did, however, was to create a network of what popularly became known as Queen's Mansions, allowing the vagrant to stay the night in one workhouse then move on to the next in an adjacent Union for the following night and so on. Various measures were introduced to deal with the problem but they simply resulted in a system that was both confused and contradictory. On the one hand the 'professional' vagrant was discouraged from using the workhouse simply as free board and lodging through various punitive measures. After 1842 for example a task of work would be demanded of him before his release in the morning, and that release would be delayed until 11.00 a.m. After 1882 he was required to spend two consecutive nights in the workhouse with a full day's work required in between, with complete isolation enforced whilst he was both working and sleeping. (Most new casual wards were constructed with individual cells, reminiscent of prisons). But then how could one ensure that all this did not also punish the 'honest' vagrant who had been forced to take to the road in search of gainful employment? On the other hand many Unions chose to relax this harsh regime and actively encourage vagrants to use their casual wards because this was preferable to having them sleep rough and cause trouble by begging or stealing. The only alternative accommodation for the vagrant was the common lodging house, by far the largest of which in Havant was at the Old House at Home public house in South Street. Here they were provided for in a large shed at the rear of the building.

Overall the trend was for the number of vagrants to increase as the century progressed with the result that greater provision was made for them in workhouses and this is clearly borne out in Havant.

The workhouse certainly had some sort of casual ward before 1873 but by this date it was deemed both inadequate and in a very poor state of repair. It

was not until 1879 however that a new casual ward, complete with bathing facilities, was created and this was enlarged in 1887 when, for the first time, there was separate accommodation for female vagrants. Upon their reception vagrants would be bathed and given a bed for the night followed by a meagre breakfast in the morning. In 1866 the 'bed' was a straw mattress and a rug, the breakfast six ounces (170 grams) of bread. A task of work, probably oakum-picking, would then be required before release, although by 1892 complaints were being made that this was no longer being invariably enforced. Not long after this the topic of vagrancy became an increasingly urgent one because the mid-1890s saw a sharp rise in the number of vagrants throughout the country. This increase is reflected at Havant where in the period from March 1894 to March 1895 the number of vagrants admitted to the casual wards soared to an unprecedented 716. Although it soon fell quite sharply it was proposed, in January 1896, to erect a new casual ward on land adjoining the east end of the workhouse then owned by Hampshire County Council. It was over a year however before the Guardians approved the scheme, and then only by the narrowest of margins. Some, like the Reverend Richards, thought that the money allocated for it of over £1,000 would be better spent on deserving causes like the aged poor rather than on *those wretched tramps who earned their living by thieving*. The new casual ward was eventually completed in 1898 at a more modest cost of £640.

Lunatics and the Mentally Deficient

Before the Hampshire County Lunatic Asylum at Knowle was opened in December 1852 most paupers in the Havant Union (as elsewhere) variously classified as 'lunatics', 'imbeciles' or 'idiots', as well as those suffering from other conditions such as dementia would have been confined in the workhouse with only the most disturbed or violent being confined, at the Union's expense, in a private asylum. But once Knowle opened its doors it took in virtually all these cases. In theory at least this was a great advance. Workhouses were relieved of the burden of coping with inmates they were utterly ill-equipped to handle whilst the paupers themselves were placed in a secure, purpose-built institution where trained staff could care for and, where appropriate, attempt to cure them.

This however came at a financial cost to the Union for the County Asylum charged for every patient they received. In 1864 Knowle's rate was 11s. 2d. (56p) per patient per week, and, although by the 1890s this had fallen to below 10s. (50p) (and from 1874 every Union was granted a subsidy of 4s. (20p) per patient per week) the cost of maintaining lunatic paupers remained a significant burden. There was, therefore, a strong incentive for Unions to keep the numbers they committed to a minimum, and to press for the earliest possible release of anyone deemed to be cured.

Yet despite this the numbers kept on rising relentlessly. In 1850 there were fewer than 10,000 paupers in the nation's asylums, but by the turn of the century there were over 90,000, and this national trend is reflected in Hampshire. When it opened Knowle received in total from the 23 Hampshire Unions fewer than 200 inmates. Yet 15 years later, in a building originally designed to hold a maximum of 400, there were over 600, and by the turn of the century over 1,000, despite many being removed to the Isle of Wight Asylum when it opened in 1896. Indeed so rapidly did Knowle become overcrowded that by the 1860s the authorities there were desperately urging Unions to take back as many of the 'harmless incurables' as they could. Thus on the 1871 census we find nine 'imbeciles' and three 'idiots from birth' in the Havant Workhouse. In many respects it was a step back to the pre-1852 days.

By the 1800s the number of paupers from the Havant Union at Knowle had risen sufficiently (it averaged about 25) for a Lunatic Visiting Committee to be established in 1876, and once a year they would visit Knowle to check upon the treatment of their inmates and ascertain the chances of any of them being permanently released.

Exactly what caused this inexorable rise in the number of lunatic paupers was a hotly debated topic in the 19th century, but increased urbanisation was undoubtedly a factor. Not only was urban living much more hectic, stressful and competitive it was also much less able to accommodate eccentric or deviant behaviour, and a good example of this can be seen at Havant with the case of Caroline Beaton. The order for her reception into Knowle, dated 12 December 1870, and written by the Workhouse Medical Officer, William Bannister, survives in the Hampshire County Records Office

and from it we learn that Bannister had found her *wild in manner, using incoherent language, exhibiting herself in the streets and dressed fantastically... at the same time singing and capering about*. Her neighbours had also complained of her *singing and making noises* all night. In earlier times Caroline Beaton would probably have been tolerated as the local 'mad woman' and left alone. But by 1870 Havant was a community of some 3,000 people and Caroline herself lived in Somerstown, Havant's most overcrowded slum. Her committal was therefore almost inevitable. The rest of her life is a depressing tale. Over the course of the next ten years she was released, re-admitted and released again, but must surely have been in a disturbed state when she appeared before the Havant Magistrates in December 1880 charged with breaking a plate glass window at the Dolphin Hotel. (She escaped prosecution but was warned as to her future conduct). In February 1887 she was reported to be *wandering around apparently of unsound mind* and a few months later she was back in Knowle for at least the third time. By 1899 she had been released once more and was now in the workhouse, but soon her behaviour was giving cause for complaint and she was confined yet again – this time for good. In 1902 the Lunatic Visiting Committee found her bed-ridden and 'feeble with age' but she did not eventually die until 1912, at the age of 95.

It was unfortunately true that asylums were increasingly used as human dustbins for a variety of inadequate misfits and awkward deviants, but even when treatment was possible and cures attempted recovery rates were low and – as in Caroline Beaton's case – any 'recovery' was often no more than temporary.

Thus every year after their visit to Knowle the Lunatic Visiting Committee would report that, although all of the inmates from the Havant Union were being well cared for, the likelihood that any more than one or two of them might soon be released was remote. The truth was that most paupers committed to an asylum would end their days there.

Treating the Sick

The 1834 Act made no reference to the sick within the workhouse and left the provision of outdoor medical relief, such as it was, unchanged. It was not

until the late 1840s that Unions were obliged to provide a Medical Officer for each of their parishes (although for some time the Havant Union made do with just three) and the Medical officer for Havant Parish also became the workhouse doctor. For almost 50 years this post was held by just one man – William Bannister. By the time he eventually retired in 1900 at the age of 78 he was practically an institution and the Guardians awarded him a pension of £60 per annum; he was, however, a man often embroiled in controversy. In the late 1850s for example several complaints were made against him for falsely claiming attendance fees, and in 1874 the Guardians actually reported him to the Local Government Board for his:

General conduct towards the board, the sick in the house and parish, and Union officers [as well as]: his refusal to forward invoices for cheques issues to him by the board.

It was resolved that if he did not resign he would be dismissed. But when they received from him a letter of profuse apology and a promise to mend his ways they relented. Even as late as December 1899 however the workhouse master was complaining about *his mode of business and his treatment of him and other officers in the house*. He could clearly be a very difficult man to get along with.

The workhouse did not employ a nurse until 1882, although initially her duties also included looking after the infants, needlework and *generally making herself useful* – all for just £12 per annum Unfortunately this was another position where no one seemed willing to stay for very long. By April 1885 the first incumbent, Nurse Underwood, had resigned and been replaced by Nurse Sweeney, although by now the salary had been increased to £25 per annum. Nurse Sweeney tendered her resignation shortly before Christmas 1887, but when no replies were received to advertisements placed to find her successor she offered to stay on. It was resolved however that she must leave, the reason being that: *she was found drunk on Christmas Day*. Eventually a replacement, Nurse James, was found but neither she nor her two successors, Nurse Hook and Nurse Darling, lasted more than a few months each; and when, yet again, repeated advertisements failed to attract any suitable replacement for Nurse Darling after her departure in August 1891 the Guardians turned to the Workhouse Infirmary Nursing Association

(WINA) for a temporary appointment. One was duly found and for the next few years a succession of WINA nurses was hired.

One area where special measures had to be taken was in the handling of infectious diseases, most notably smallpox but also measles, scarlet fever, enteric fever, influenza and a few others. What provisions were made to deal with them in the early years is uncertain but in 1858 the Guardians rented, and subsequently purchased, a cottage in Stockheath Lane for the reception of smallpox and other patients. This Pest House, as it was often called, remained in use until 1876 when the property was sold and a piece of land purchased at the end of the Union garden for *the erection thereupon of infectious wards*, although exactly where this might have been is uncertain. It was not until December 1880 however that the new buildings, costing nearly £1,000 and designed by the Portsmouth architect George Hudson, were ready to receive patients. Although invariably called a hospital it was in fact merely an isolation unit and had no extra dedicated staff, medical or otherwise. As part of the workhouse it was, strictly speaking, for pauper patients only, but there were instances of non-paupers being admitted, most notably the Union's Relieving Officer, Ernest Bryan, when he contracted smallpox in June 1883. This was much to the disapproval of the Local Government Board who repeatedly urged the Guardians to hand over the facilities to some other body so that they could be legitimately used for all cases of infectious disease. The Guardians however were unwilling to relinquish control over something they had so recently created at such great expense and suggested instead that non-paupers might be admitted *upon payment of such charges as may be fixed by the Guardians*. But the Local Government Board were adamant and eventually, in 1889, it was agreed that the isolation facilities should be run by a new body, the Havant Joint Hospital Board. It took more than three years for all the legal and financial arrangements to be made but the Havant Joint Hospital Board finally came into being in February 1893.

One of their first decisions however was to create a brand new Fever Hospital, with a permanent nursing staff, and by 1894 this hospital had been built, at a cost of £2,000, on land to the north-east of the workhouse which had been purchased by the Guardians in 1887. (The Wickes store now stands

on this piece of land.) The old isolation unit, the largest and most expensive project the Guardians had ever undertaken, had been in use for just 14 years.

The Workhouse after 1900

As the 20th century progressed the Poor Law in general and the institution of the workhouse in particular became increasingly marginalised. Rather than wholesale reform – or even outright abolition – successive governments chose instead to create, piecemeal, a parallel system of relief that simply bypassed the Poor Law altogether and removed more and more people from it.

The most important innovations were old age pensions in 1908 and National Insurance in 1911, which compelled workers to make contributions from their wages towards a scheme providing relief in cases of sickness, invalidity or unemployment. In neither instance was their effect immediate but eventually they did a great deal to reduce both the aged and able-bodied populations of the workhouse. In addition, in 1915, the Local Government Board decreed that no child over the age of three should, unless sick, remain more than six weeks in a workhouse. If orphaned, or otherwise deprived of their parents, they should either, be boarded out, i.e. found temporary or permanent foster parents, or sent to an orphanage. One such institution was Shirley Cottages, a village 'colony' for some 400 orphans at Shirley near Croydon which received a number of children from Havant Workhouse in the 1910s and 20s.

The final 30 years of the Havant Union were not dramatic ones. There were none of the scandals or crises that periodically afflicted it in the 19th century, and the Guardians seem to have conducted their duties with a greater degree of competence. (There were also women elected to the board, the first being Miss Hodgkinson in 1902).

Before World War One the one major improvement to the workhouse was the arrival of mains drainage in 1908 and the one notable change in the workhouse's regime was the ending of oakum-picking as the labour task for the able-bodied males and its replacement by stone-breaking. In November 1907 the Guardians resolved that:

Havant Borough History Booklets



August 2016

Compiled by Ralph Cousins

ralph.cousins@btinternet.com

023 9248 4024

Printed by Park Community Enterprises

All booklets printed in A5 size except those marked* which
are A4

View all booklets, comment, and order
on line at: www.hhbkt.com



Copies also on sale at the Spring Arts and Heritage Centre,
East Street, HAVANT, PO9 1BS. 023 9247 2700

Havant Borough History Booklets

- 1 A Brief History of Havant £5
- 2 A Brief History of Stockheath £3
- 3 A Brief History of the Railway in Havant £6
- 4 The Arrival of the Railway in Emsworth
- 5 A Collection of Articles on Hayling Island, Vol. 1 £6
- 6 A Short History of Emsworth and Warblington £6
- 7 The Bedhampton War Memorial £1.50
- 8* Belmont Park £2
- 9 Charles Lewis, Surveyor and Auctioneer in Nineteenth Century Havant 50p
- 10 The Edgar Borrow Foundation 50p
- 11 Havant Congregationalists in the Edwardian Era 1901–1914 £1
- 12 The Havant Dissenters' Cemetery £3
- 13 The Havant Memorial Cross £2
- 14 Havant United Reformed Church £3
- 15 Havant War Memorial Hospital and the Royal Doulton Nursery Rhyme Tiles £5
- 16 Brick Making on Hayling Island
- 17 History of Leigh Park and the Hamlet of Leigh £3
- 18 HMS *Havant* £2
- 19 Farms in the Leigh Park Area £3
- 20 Malting and Brewing in Havant £4
- 21 Wartime Memories of Hayling £5
- 22 The Great War of 1914 to 1918 £5
- 23 The Havant Bonfire Boys £2
- 24 The Havant Cemeteries at New lane and Eastern Road £6
- 25 The Hayling Bridge and Wadeway £6
- 26 The Hayling Island Branch Line £6
- 27 The Inns and Public Houses of Rowlands Castle, Durrants, Redhill, Finchdean, Forestside and Stansted £6
- 28 The Inns of Bedhampton £4
- 29 Havant's Inns, Posting Houses and Public Houses £6
- 30 The Public Houses and Inns of Waterlooville, Cowplain, Lovedean, Purbrook and Widley £6

- 31 The Rookery and Somerstown £1
- 32 The Spring Arts and Heritage Centre and Borough of Havant Timeline £6
- 33 Childhood Memories of Havant in the Second World War £6
- 34* The Public Houses and Hostelryes of Hayling Island £8
- 35 A Brief History of Emsworth and Warblington
- 36 Havant in the Second World War £5
- 37 Reaction, a First World War Poem £2
- 38 A History of the Post Office in Havant Area £6
- 39 Revd Thomas Loveder
- 40 The Making of Havant Volume 1 £5
- 41 The Making of Havant Volume 2 £5
- 42 The Making of Havant Volume 3 £5
- 43 The Making of Havant Volume 4 £5
- 44 The Making of Havant Volume 5 £5
- 45* The Development of Denvilles, Havant £8
- 46 The Havant Union Workhouse £5
- 47 A Collection of Articles on Hayling Island, Vol. 2 £6
- 48 The Forgotten Admirals of Leigh £5
- 49 A Collection of Articles on the Havant United Reformed Church £5
- 50 A Brief History of Bedhampton £6
- 51 Coach Traffic in Nineteenth Century Emsworth £1
- 52 The Postal History of Waterloooville £5
- 53 The Remarkable Mr Pink £3
- 54 Bedhampton and Havant and the Royal Navy £6
- 55* A History of Waterloooville Vol. 1 £6
- 56* A History of Waterloooville Vol. 2 £6
- 57* A History of Waterloooville Vol. 3 £6
- 58 A History of Waterloooville, Alan Reger £3
- 59 A Brief History of Havant, A. M. Brown
- 60* Origins of Portsmouth Corporation Bus Routes to Leigh Park £6
- 61* Origins of Southdown Motor Services Bus Routes to Leigh Park £6
- 62 Warblington, Its Castle and Its Church £4
- 63 Proposed Langstone Harbour Airbase £3
- 64 The Passing Scene – Waterloo to Portsmouth by Train £2
- 65* William Henry Stone. His History and Time at Leigh Park £6
- 66 A Langstone Miscellany £6

Park Community Enterprises

Park Community Enterprises is a not for profit company that has been setup by four senior members of staff at Park Community School to enable students to gain training, work experience and key employability skills. This has been achieved by the setting up of a number of small commercial businesses at which students take part in all of the stages of running a small business, the first of these is Park Design and Print. Park Design and Print have a range of modern digital printing equipment and are able to produce, to a commercial standard, a full range of printed and personalised promotional items.

023 9248 9840 PDP@pcs.hants.sch.uk

Printing: Business Stationery, Flyers, Brochures, Booklets, Postcards, Menus, Posters, Banners, Pop Up Displays, Pads, NCR Pads.

Personalised Items: Greetings Cards, Mugs, Moneyboxes, Keyrings, Badges, Fridge Magnets, Canvas Prints, T-Shirts.

Signage and Graphics: Internal and External Signage, Vehicle Graphics and Wraps, together with a full design service.



educating
and inspiring
young people

Established to give young people real life work experience

Subject to approval by the Local Government Board they break one cwt. (51kg) of granite to a half inch (12mm) gauge, for which approved stone-pounders have been purchased. The Local Government Board duly gave their approval and application was then made to the Urban District Council for a supply of stone.

The average number of inmates for this pre-war period fell slightly, never reaching 80 and often dropping below 60. There were 68 on the 1911 Census, with just five children under the age of seven but no less than 35 aged 60 or over – 20 of these being over 70. Birthplaces remained predominantly local. Labourer was still the most common occupation for males and domestic servant for females, but there was a slightly greater variety of other occupations including sawyer, saddler, fisherman, wheelwright and even one golf green keeper.

At the outbreak of the World War One there were fears that the conflict would bring increased hardship, but in fact the reverse was the case. By the end of 1915 with so many men in the Army and so much extra war work needing to be done at home, able-bodied pauperism had – probably for the first time ever – effectively disappeared and workhouse populations everywhere decreased. As late as May 1915 Havant Workhouse still held around 55 inmates, but by December, when the number should have risen, it was just 44 and the Guardians were debating whether to meet only once every four weeks instead of once a fortnight as there was so little work for them. They eventually decided to do so in March 1916 and continued to meet every four weeks for the rest of the Union's existence. They even agreed to take in inmates from elsewhere. In January 1916 a dozen convalescents were received from the Westbourne Workhouse whilst in March 1918 a dozen more came from East Preston Workhouse (Sussex) when that was taken over for use as a military hospital. Even so, by December 1918 the number of inmates had actually fallen again to about 40.

The war, however, impacted in other ways. Annual elections for the Board of Guardians were suspended, directives from and inspections by the Local Government Board all but ceased and finding anyone to undertake even the most basic maintenance or repair work was a near impossibility. Proposed improvements, such as the erection of a new infirmary, agreed in December

1914, were now out of the question. Perhaps most profoundly of all there were shortages of fuel and food (leading to restrictions in the inmates' diet) and the price of all commodities rose steeply. In consequence, by the end of the war, all of the workhouse staff – which now included an assistant matron and an assistant nurse – had obtained salary increases in the order of 15 to 20 per cent.

The war-time boom lasted until 1921. There was then a severe slump of almost two years duration, and although it was followed by a recovery this was at best partial and the twenties remained a decade of high unemployment particularly in the industrial regions. Workhouse populations, however, did not rise dramatically for now, in addition to old age pensions and national insurance the Government was paying out tens of millions of pounds a year in War Widows' Pensions and Disabled Servicemen's Pensions to relieve hardship.

At Havant the number of workhouse inmates remained at around the war-time average until the middle of 1921 when it began to rise, reaching a peak of 60 in August 1922, the highest it had been since 1914. Thereafter, however, it declined again until by the late twenties it was averaging only 30 to 35 with an all-time low in June 1929 of just 27. Another economic downturn saw it rise again, but it was still only 36 when the Board of Guardians met for the last time in March 1930. There remained, however, two categories of pauper for whom the workhouse continued to provide the principal source of relief: vagrants and what were now termed the mentally deficient or feeble-minded.

The number of vagrants using the nation's casual wards fluctuated considerably. It rose steadily to just under 15,000 in 1909, fell equally steadily up to 1914, then plummeted during the war, until by the Armistice it was scarcely more than 1,000. But it rose once again in the depressed years of the 1920s, swelled by ex-servicemen, and by 1929 it was back to the level of 20 years previously. Treatment of this vagrant population continued to vary enormously from Union to Union encompassing, in the words of Sidney and Beatrice Webb *every degree of penal harshness and sentimental indulgence*. Not surprisingly the harsh regimes drove vagrants away whilst the casual wards of the lenient ones were often full to overflowing.

Havant seems to have been one of the more popular. In 1917 for example, when it was suggested that the casual wards might be closed, the *Guardians* were informed that no less than 165 vagrants (33 of them female) had been received into them in just six months, whilst in 1921 the master reported the admittance of *a large number of tramps* because so many of the other casual wards in the region had been shut. It also appears to have been Havant's policy to admit and discharge vagrants on a Sunday, a very unusual thing to do. The article on the workhouse in the original *Making of Havant* series, written in 1978 when many people could still recall the institution in its final years, gives us some insight into their treatment:

Men, women and children were all housed separately in the Union Workhouse. Entrance was through the porch, and the wooden floors and stairs were always scrubbed very white. Dormer windows gave light to the dormitories for the men and women, and the one for the women was always cheerful. There was also an infirmary for the sick and a casual ward for vagrants. The able residents helped to care for the sick, and worked to make the unit self-supporting, partly by doing laundry and gardening. The vagrants, or tramps, used the Union workhouses in line, e.g. moving from Brighton to Havant to Southampton, and so on. When they arrived at Havant, they queued at a door at the East side of the workhouse for admission to the casual ward. Once inside, they were deloused, given a night's rest and food, and in return gave a certain amount of help in the house or garden. Only vagrants with no money were admitted to the workhouse: those who could pay for their lodgings were sent to the Old House at Home public house in South Street where they were accommodated in a large shed at the rear of the building.

The inhabitants of the workhouse were originally those out of work, but in later years were mostly those unable to stand the stress of working and looking after themselves, and many were mentally retarded. The children were mostly those abandoned by their parents, and in later years were boarded out with families, the forerunner of present-day fostering. One interesting character in the Union in the early 1900s was Tye Garnett. He was a simple old man, who was pleased

to attend the Congregational Sunday School in Elm Lane, and sat in the class of older boys for the ten o'clock session. When the children went into the church for worship, Tye sat with them in the gallery, and left quietly with them during the singing of the psalm after the sermonet (talk to children). Tye always went on the Sunday School outing, and enjoyed the picnic tea, races and scrambles for sweets. He expected, and received, a prize at the Sunday School Anniversary for regular attendance, like the children.

In early days the inmates of the Union Workhouse wore uniforms but later on although uniforms were given up the clothes were still utilitarian and drab. Workhouse residents had their own pew in St Faith's Church. Burials were in (dreaded words) Paupers' Graves. Coffins, made first by George Outen and then by Mr. Stallard, cost about £1 and were trundled on a cart to the burial ground. Costs had risen sharply in half a century since, in 1860, the cost of a small coffin was 4s. (20p) and a large one 11s. (55p). The brighter side of life included annual outings in a coach, with tea. Mr George Blackman, one of the Guardians, took a great interest in all the work but particularly in these outings and provided gifts of sweets and tobacco. At Christmas time there were decorations and gifts from local families.

The terms mentally deficient and feeble-minded were somewhat vague but came to encompass an ever-expanding range of people. They certainly included those who in the 19th century had been classified as 'idiots' and 'imbeciles' but now also embraced anyone who might be regarded as mentally retarded or unable to fend adequately for themselves. Indeed in 1913 it was estimated that as many as half-a-million people could be so defined, and in the twenties the Webbs calculated that they constituted about one quarter of the entire workhouse population. The only data we have for Havant comes from the 1911 Census, where no fewer than 13 of the 68 inmates are categorised as 'feeble-minded', although the majority of them are of extreme old age. As early as 1905 it was recommended that this class of pauper be transferred to special institutions, and the 1913 Mental Deficiency Act gave County Councils the powers to erect them. But almost nothing was done until long after the war. In Hampshire it was not until 1928, with the opening of Coldeast Hospital near Sarisbury, that the county's workhouses

began, at last, to be emptied of their 'feeble-minded' inmates.

The final years of the Havant Union's existence remained, by and large, uneventful. No great changes were made to the workhouse regime and nothing more than routine maintenance of the buildings was undertaken.

Henry and Aurelia Ripp remained as master and matron until June 1929 when they retired, to be replaced by Mr and Mrs Jakeway. By this time two other long-standing Union officials had also retired: clerk Edward Longcroft in April 1928, after over 50 years in the post, and the Workhouse Medical Officer AJ Norman seven months later. He had succeeded William Bannister in 1900.

One post that continued to be a problem however was that of workhouse nurse. Even after the Guardians had ceased to rely upon temporary agency staff nurses continued to come and go with some regularity, and not always under the happiest of circumstances. In September 1918 for example Nurse Collins was forced to retire after suffering a serious assault by one of the inmates whilst in September 1929 Nurse Quinn absconded after being seen to force large quantities of water down the throat of a terminally ill patient who died soon afterwards.

The Havant Guardians met for the last time on 6 March 1930. On 1 April the running of the workhouse and the administration of outdoor relief was handed over to the Gosport Area Public Assistance Committee of the Hampshire County Council and the workhouse officially became known as a Public Assistance Institution.

The records of this committee are not currently available, but the minutes of the General Public Assistance Committee of the County Council are, and they reveal that the fate of the Havant Workhouse was clear from the start. In November 1931 it was found to be the most expensive workhouse in the county to run, a fact largely attributable to the cost of the staff, whilst in May 1934 it was identified as one of several workhouses:

Which, by reason of their age, are costly to maintain in a proper state of repair and by nature of their construction fall short of present day requirements.

A special conference to debate its future was held in Havant in January 1935. It resolved nothing and officially no decision had been made as to its future. However at the end of March the casual wards were shut and the rest of the workhouse followed suit a year later. The remaining inmates were transferred to the workhouse at Fareham, which had recently been both refurbished and enlarged.

In 1937 the premises were offered for sale to the Havant Urban District Council, but they declined to pay the 'substantial sum' Hampshire County Council was demanding, on the grounds that:

As the buildings had originally been erected by the Havant Parish and Union, using local ratepayers' money, they had, in effect, paid for them once already.

Instead the Police Authority took over the site, but plans to erect a new police station here were first postponed by the outbreak of World War Two and then abandoned altogether. The Havant Urban District Council did, however, purchase the workhouse garden for use as allotments. The old mortuary was utilised as a store and trading hut by the Havant Horticultural Society, although there were apparently some Havant residents who adamantly refused to set foot in it because of its previous use. These allotments survived until 1955 when the current fire station was built on them.

The workhouse itself remained derelict until 1947 when demolition finally took place. The site then underwent a variety of uses, including a civil defence and health centre, until the 1990s when the present day complex of flats named Longcroft was erected.

Havant Union Poor Rate Collectors in the 19th Century

The money to run the Union Workhouse and provide outdoor relief was raised by the levying of a Poor Rate, and four times a year the Union Rate Collector would set up a 'pay station' in each of the six parishes to which local ratepayers would come to hand over their contributions, invariably in cash.

The office of Rate Collector was therefore a position of some responsibility, involving the handling of several thousands of pounds, and consequently carried a considerable salary: £60 per annum in the 1850s, rising to £100 per

annum by the early 1890s.

The identity of the very first Rate Collector for the Havant Union is unknown, but by 1851 the position was being filled by John Pullinger, a Havant resident who had previously been a cooper. Up until about 1860 Pullinger seems to have done his job competently enough, but in January 1861 it was suddenly revealed that there were rate arrears totalling no less than £1,774. Consequently the Union's funds were overdrawn by almost £400 (in 1856 they had been in credit by nearly £250) and the Treasurer, Mr Gilman, was refusing to honour any more cheques issued by the Poor Law Guardians.

If this seems like a crisis then the Guardians were anything but swift in dealing with it. It was not until August 1862 that Pullinger was summoned to appear before them, with all his relevant books and papers *to enable the Board to judge the state of the Union's finances* but we hear nothing more of the matter until the following June when the Treasurer was still *complaining of the state of the Union's accounts*. It was resolved that *arrangements shall be made for the better collection of the Union's contributions*, but whatever measures (if any) were put in place it made no difference. A full two years later, in July 1865 it was still being recorded that *the Collector has been unable to collect satisfactorily*.

By this time Pullinger was 70 years old and it must surely have been the case that, for at least the previous five years, he had been too old and infirm to carry out his duties properly. The obvious course for the Guardians therefore would have been to replace him with a younger and fitter man at the first sign of his difficulties. But it was not until December 1865 that Pullinger finally tendered his resignation.

At least the man that the Guardians chose to replace him, the 33-year-old Elias Carrell, was a sound choice. He soon got the Union's finances in good order and at last enabled the Guardians to pay off all their creditors, which included a number of local tradesmen who had been awarded contracts to supply the workhouse with food and other provisions.

Carrell was another Havant resident born and bred and had previously been a grocer. For the next 27 years he formed his duties diligently, and indeed became something of a pillar of local government, for he also added

Highways Inspector to the Havant Urban Sanitary Authority, Nuisances Inspector to the Rural Sanitary Authority and Superintendent Registrar to his duties during the course of the 1870s.

But in December 1892 the Auditor, examining his half-yearly accounts, discovered a deficit of some £200. Exactly what had happened is unclear, but there is no doubt that Carrell has appropriated the money for himself, possibly to overcome some temporary financial difficulties, and hoping to pay the money back before being found out. He was, naturally, dismissed from all his local government posts; but because he had repaid the money he had taken promptly, and because he had given over a quarter of a century of otherwise exemplary service, the Guardians decided to take no criminal proceedings against him. Indeed there was a great deal of sympathy for him, so much so that it was even proposed to grant him a pension of £10 per annum, until this was vetoed by the Local Government Board.

After his dismissal Carrell continued to live in Havant and found employment in the family building firm of G & R Carrell Ltd. (On the 1901 census he is recorded as a 'builder's manager' on the 1911 census as a 'builder's clerk'.) He died in 1916 at the age of 84.

With Carrell's departure the Guardians set about advertising for a replacement – and increasing the salary on offer from £100 to £150 per annum. They received well over 100 applications, from all over the country. But eventually, in March 1893, they chose the man they had originally installed as temporary Collector following Carrell's dismissal, Arthur Henry Wood.

Wood was 32 years old and yet another born and bred Havant man. His father, Henry Wood, was the local postmaster and Arthur himself was a trained solicitor who was the secretary of a local Building Society and the manager of the Havant Town Hall. He was, therefore, well-known, respectable, trustworthy and seemingly an utterly safe choice.

He had been in his post for less than two years, however, when the District Auditor reported 'serious irregularities' in the half-yearly accounts that Wood had submitted up to the end of September 1894. These were later calculated to amount to a deficit of £1,013. Asked to explain this at the

Emergency Meeting called by the Guardians on 2 March 1895 Wood claimed that *the irregularities had occurred in consequence of his carelessness*, but the Guardians suspended him with immediate effect and placed an advertisement in the *Portsmouth News* urging ratepayers not to hand over any more money to him.

A few weeks later, before the full extent of his fraud had been revealed, Wood disappeared, and although the Guardians offered a £20 reward for any information that might lead to his apprehension he remained at large.

Not surprisingly this caused a sensation and the Havant Guardians came in for a great deal of criticism. Indeed at their board meeting on 30 May one of their number, the Reverend Wells admitted that *feeling in the town is very high* and urged that *as a consequence their hands, as a board, should be shown to be quite clean*.

Wood's fraud is, however, not quite as straightforward as it might seem, for when he was appointed Rate Collector he was obliged to put up a surety, or guarantee, of £1,000, which of course he had now surrendered. And, as at the time of his disappearance he was also owed some £27 in salary arrears, his fraud had actually cost him money. So he must have felt it necessary to disappear for some other reason and had taken the £1,013 of ratepayers' money simply to cover the loss he knew he would incur by forfeiting his surety.

By far the most likely cause for his disappearance has to be linked to his role as the secretary of the Emsworth, Havant & District branch of the Starr-Bowkett Building Society. This had folded in December 1893, whereupon Wood had nobly volunteered to do all the work involved in the winding-up process himself, without payment. By April 1895 he was even able to announce that he had managed to secure for the shareholders a rather better deal than they had been expecting. Nevertheless as this was shortly before his disappearance one can only assume that he had done some sort of 'creative accounting' with the society's assets.

Although Wood may have lost his £1,000 surety it did not mean that the Havant Guardians could recoup it all, for the money had been deposited as an insurance policy with the Norwich & London Accident Insurance Company,

who would pay out only £757 12s. 5d. (£757.62).

Wood evaded justice for nine years, but eventually he was arrested in March 1904 in Oxford where he had been living under the assumed name of William Gorse. He was at once brought back to Havant and appeared before the local magistrates at the beginning of April. He pleaded guilty to two specimen charges of fraud committed in the office of union rate collector and was sentenced to four months imprisonment with hard labour.

In July 1906 he emigrated to the United States, leaving behind his wife and family.

After the Wood affair the Guardians decided that a single rate collector for the whole Union was now just too big a job and henceforth appointed one for each parish (save for North and South Hayling which were combined). This did not entirely put an end to occasional minor difficulties with rate collection, but there were certainly no more frauds or scandals to embarrass the Havant Guardians.

The following extracts are taken from the article in Volume 2 of the *Making of Havant* series published in 1978

Life in the workhouse had its lighter side, as is evident from the following account in the *Hampshire Telegraph* for 22 September 1849 about the National Infant Union School and Sunday School:

The children of the above schools assembled in a large force on the 11th at the Rectory Field. The long procession of 276 children started from the schoolroom at half past two, and caused no small stir in the town. The peal of bells merrily greeted them as they passed the venerable church. A substantial tea was prepared for their regalement, consisting of nearly 70 gallons of that refreshing beverage, 14 gallons of bread, well spread over with eight pounds of butter, a marvellous supply of plum cake was then served round and was followed by a dessert of baked apples to the number of about 700. After this the happy groups gladly commenced the various games provided for their amusement. A slippery pole was climbed, races in sacks were run, apples in the water were bobbed after, money buried in sawdust was hunted for (with an

eagerness which reminded the bystanders of "the diggins"). During this sport one of the Union boys dug up two 3d. pieces to his infinite delight, the rareness of such luck being to him sufficient compensation for the smallness of the total. There was also a game or two of cricket, skipping, bat and trap, swings, racing blindfold with wheelbarrows and a kite which soared to giddy elevation; the whole enlivened for a portion of the afternoon by a German band. During the festivities, several of the neighbouring Gentry visited the ground, and amongst them Sir George Staunton and party. They appeared highly amused at the scene and Sir George with a ready kindness consented to bestow on a large number of youthful and some very tiny candidates, the various prizes which their good conduct had gained for them. The urbanity enhanced not a little the value of the rewards. After some pleasing vocal efforts by the different schools and a thrilling and united series of 'hurrahs' from the whole party, the joyous scene terminated, and the assembled parishioners and visitors retired to their homes filled with apparent satisfaction at witnessing such a display of innocent enjoyment.

The education of the children continued to be cared for and an advertisement in the *Hampshire Telegraph* for 25 August 1849 makes interesting reading:

Havant Union

Schoolmistress wanted for the Workhouse of Havant Union.

She will be required not only to attend to the moral and religious training of the children but to teach them industrious habits, in order to their afterwards being useful as domestic servants. She must be in every respect well qualified to fill the situation, will have to pass the Examination Board of the Government Inspector of Schools and will be subject to the Regulations of the Poor Law Board. The Salary (besides the usual rations of the workhouse) will depend upon the certificate of the Inspector, but will be not less than £25 a year. She will be required to enter upon her duties immediately after her appointment.

The *Guardians'* Minutes for 12 August 1856 gave details of the decision to sink a well in the workhouse garden. It was to be 3ft 9ins diameter by 15ft

deep, @ 2s. (10p) per foot, and if possible to go to 20ft deep at the same price; if 4ft by 20ft deep, the price to be 3s. (15p) per foot. On 26 August Mr Barton was shown to have been paid £2 5s. 0d. (£2.25) for digging a well 15ft deep @ 3s. (15p) per foot. perhaps he encountered special difficulties to be rewarded at the higher rate.

The minutes for 19 September of the same year recorded that the tender of Mr James was accepted for colouring the outside of the workhouse and Boundary Walls, two coats, @ £4 10s. 0d. (£4.50) and the tender from Arthur Arter was accepted to paint the outside wood and iron, as before, for £6.

On 17 March 1857 the minutes showed a complaint from the rector, the Reverend Seymour, that certain girls sent from the workhouse to the national school had been ill-used by Mrs Fry, matron of the workhouse. This was confirmed on enquiry. The Poor Law Board was requested to send an inspector to investigate. The girls were removed to the care of the relieving officer. Significantly, Mr and Mrs Fry resigned on 31 March to be replaced on 28 April by Mr and Mrs Earwaker. Eighty-four indoor paupers were listed in the Guardians' minutes for 1870, which also gave the cost of haircutting and shaving for one quarter as £2.

In 1871 the minutes reported an emigration to Canada for two boys, John Pitt and James Hoskins, both aged 15 years. They would be sent out at a maximum cost of £10 each for outfit and passage with the 'Brighton Association'.

Workhouse Treat

The children of the Havant Union enjoyed an outing. They were joined by the boys of the Purbrook Industrial School. By invitation of Mr Deverell they were invited to Purbrook Park. Tea was provided. Toys were given to the children 'some useful, some amusing' according to their ages. Mrs Deverall was assisted by Mrs General Napier, the Misses Napier, and other ladies and gentlemen.

Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle, 23 August 1884

The last master and matron were Mr and Mrs Ripp who were very popular. Mr Charles Best, the Relieving Officer, visited nearby families and allowed 5s. (25p) to 7s. 6d. (37½p) worth of groceries to those in need but *no*

intoxicating liquor or cigarettes. These orders were given first to the Standings' grocery shop in North Street and later to Burge's grocery shop, also in North Street.

By 1935 the Union outings had become rather more sophisticated and the *Hampshire Telegraph* of 18 January recorded an outing to 'Cinderella' at Southsea for a party of the inmates of the Poor Law Institution by charabanc, with sweets, tobacco, etc. provided.

The Poor Law Act of 1930 gave control of the Institution to the County Council and the Public Assistance Committee took charge of the building. The new system met with some criticism and obviously had initial teething troubles. The local paper carried an article stating that the new Guardians of the Public Assistance Committee were 'merely ornamental' whereas the old Guardians under the Poor Law were 'exceedingly useful'.

The local paper for 11 January 1935 recorded that more changes were on the way:

A new chapter in the social history of the country opened this week when the Unemployment Assistance Board set out in its career as the national authority charged with the maintenance and welfare of the able-bodied unemployed. By the beginning of March the Board will have taken over from local authorities all able-bodied unemployed now receiving poor relief.

The need for the institution was coming to an end.

The *Hampshire Telegraph* for 18 January 1935 reported that at the Gosport Area Guardians' Committee, which now dealt with all the Institutions in the area, the question was again raised about the proposed closure of Havant's Poor Law Institution. Havant Council were dealing directly with the Ministry of Health and had received a reply from the minister that no decision had yet been reached. At the same meeting several members expressed concern that the patients were being given margarine, and a recommendation was agreed that patients should be given butter instead of margarine in all institutions in the area.

The welfare of the patients continued to concern the Guardians to the end. On 22 February 1935 the problem of butter versus margarine was again in the news. The Public Assistance Committee was to be asked to reconsider their decision that butter should be given only to patients recommended by

their doctors. The Guardians wanted this concession extended to all patients. It was also resolved to ask the Public Assistance Committee what special arrangements were to be made in poor law cases and for institutional inmates for the King's Jubilee Celebrations.

The Guardians' Committee, meeting at Fareham, were told that Havant would shortly close its vagrancy wards in the institution as new wards were nearly completed at Fareham which would be more economical to run. Still no decision had been received from the minister about the closure of the Havant Poor Law Institution itself, and the Havant area sub-committee was continuing to protest about the closure. All the protests were in vain. The institution was closed in 1936 when the inmates were transferred to St Christopher's Home, Wickham Road, Fareham.

Some recorded costs of the Workhouse

Beef sticking pieces @ 6d. (2½p) per lb; Mutton @ 6d. (2½p) per lb; Suet @ 5d, (2p) per lb; Flour @ £2 12s. 6d. (£2.62½) per sack; Peas @ 8s. 6d. (42½p) per bushel; Rice @ 2d. (1p) per lb; Coal @ £1 3s. (£1.15) per ton; Ale @ 10d. (4p) per gallon.

Joseph Broomfield was appointed porter and baker @ £20 per annum plus board and lodging. Relief given to George Allen, able-bodied pauper of £2 2s. (£2.10) for the outfit of two of his daughters for service; and to Fanny Garnett for an outfit for service. Expenses of the Union, including salaries, was about £5,500.

A report to the Board of Guardians on 13 September stated that the Relieving Officer had paid out for two weeks a total of £60 6s. 1d. (£60.30) in money, £3 15s. 2½d. (£3.76) in bread and £5 0s. 2½d. (£5.01) in necessities.

1862 – Another report to the Guardians on 12 August stated that the Relieving Officer had paid out £25 4s. 6d. (£25.22½) in money and £4 17s. 7d. (£4.88) in kind. The clerk read a letter from a Frederick Chitty, late Lieutenant in the Indian Army, asking for an advance by way of a loan, and it was resolved that a loan of 12s. (60p) per week be granted on security of his pension. Out-relief was revived and cost that year £40 per week.

A complaint was made to the Guardians, and reported in the local paper, that

the daughters of paupers were going out to service and that this would lead to immorality and discontent among the smaller ratepayers.

1877 – Expenses for the half-year ending Lady Day were £2,279 10s. 11¾d. (£2,279.55).

1934 – Gosport Area Guardian Committee, Havant Sub-Committee Report:

Out-Relief – The scale was for guidance and should not be considered a rigid one. It was 5s. (25p) for 30 hours work! Mr Blackman spoke for the poor with feeling... if the poor throughout the County were to be dealt with as some of the poor were at Havant, then God help them!"

1939 – The new regime did not believe in largesse either. The new form of assistance came under fire in the local press where it was reported that the scale of public assistance in Hampshire was very low. In evidence to refute this, the following figures were quoted for Havant for the week ending 1 April 1938 and for the corresponding period in 1939:

1938 – 162 persons cost £54 0s. 6d. (£54.02½)

1939 – 156 persons cost £52 2s. 0d. (£52.10)

A Personal Reflection on the Workhouse

Ralph Cousins

Many people delving into their family history find some connection with a workhouse.

One of my grandfathers was the George Outen mentioned in the previous article. He, like so many, gained employment from the workhouse by supplying goods or services. He not only made coffins but also attended the funerals helping to pull the funeral cart and acting as a pall bearer.

A story is told of one funeral where the deceased had requested to be buried at Hayling Island. Being a long and thirsty journey the pall bearers found it necessary to stop at a public house on the way for refreshment. They went inside for a drink and left the cart and corpse on the forecourt. Something not likely to be seen today.

When George's sister, Harriet, became old and the family were unable to look after her she went to the St Christopher's Home at Fareham. This had

formerly been the Fareham Workhouse Infirmary. I always wanted to visit her but was told that children under 14 years of age were not allowed. Whether this was true or not I do not know, it may have been an excuse to prevent me seeing the place.

Edward Outen, 1806–1868, my two times great grand uncle, was married to Elizabeth Wrapkins, 1811–1847. It would seem that after her death some of her children were put into the Havant Union Workhouse as her ninth child Edward, who was born in 1845, died there aged three in 1848. Their tenth child Martha Mary, born in 1847 and possibly the cause of Elizabeth's death, was in the workhouse in 1851 and 1871 according to the censuses. Martha had two children while in the workhouse by unknown fathers. William was born and died in April 1870 and Ernest Edward was born 1872 and died in 1876 aged four. Martha eventually left the workhouse and married John Underwood with whom she had four more children when they lived in Gosport. Martha herself died in 1909 whilst in the 'House of Industry' (another name for a workhouse), Gosport, her husband having died in 1895. She was not in the workhouse in 1901 so must have kept away from there for a while at least.

My other grandfather, Augustus Cousins, who had been a Havant parchment maker, found himself on hard times and was admitted to the Isleworth Workhouse Infirmary where he died at the age of 57 in 1917.

A distant relation I met up with some years ago was so pleased to see me as he had not been able to find out much about his family background. This was because his mother had been born in a workhouse and was ashamed to speak of it although it was no fault of hers. Indeed for all of us who have such connections it is difficult not to feel similar shame and guilt notwithstanding there is nothing we can or could do about it.

Although the Havant Workhouse closed in 1935 it was still in the minds of people of that generation. When I was young my mother would often say when we had had some upset *when I am old I expect you will put me in the workhouse.*



George Outen and his son, Leonard, who conducted paupers' funerals

The Emsworth Poorhouse

(Written circa 1937 by unknown author)

Over 100 years ago a local historian wrote: *The poor, for a series of years, have been a great and increasing burden on the parish.* So the present-day problem of the Public Assistance Committees is nothing new! The closing of the casual wards at Havant does not only mean the end of the chapter, but the opening of the books relating to the history of the local poorhouse.

But if the progress through life of many of the younger folk who have had to spend a period in the Havant Casual Ward could be revealed, it would be found that a good proportion have made good and proved the truth of the saying that many an honest heart beats under a ragged coat!

How many of our readers are aware that Warblington, too, had its poorhouse, and in the very heart of the town of Emsworth! Mr A. W. Rubick, a well-known local historian, reminds us that Emsworth's poorhouse comprised a group of cottages just to the north of the North Street entrance to St James's Churchyard. These cottages are still in a good state of preservation as private residences.

The poorhouse, built on a piece of waste adjoining Emsworth, was: *Granted by Thomas Panton, Esq. May 22, 1776, to several of the principal inhabitants, for a term of 1,000 years, the survivor of whom assigned the home and premises to the rector, and his successor for the time being, in trust for the parish.*

Oakum and Needlework

The building was sufficiently capacious for the purpose, and in March 1814, contained five men, seven women, ten boys, and nine girls. We are told:

The men, in mild weather, being old and infirm, pick oakham, the women are employed in needlework and household affairs; boys ten years of age work in the sail manufactory; those, under that age go to the parish school.

The men and women live in separate apartments, but eat together; the old people have three hot meat dinners, one soup dinner, two cold meat

dinners, one bread and cheese dinner; for breakfast, bread and butter, except the boys and girls, who have gruel; for supper, bread and cheese and beer. The master is allowed £20 per annum for collecting the rates, and farms the poor at 5s. 3d. (26p) per head, and he supplies them with every necessary, except physic, wine, and spirits.

The parish school, upon Dr. Bell's system, was, we are further informed:

Established here by the zeal of the inhabitants, June 25, 1812. and occupies the workshops adjoining the poorhouse, divided into two apartments for boys and girls, in a neat and becoming manner. In March, 1814, there were 60 boys and 50 girls, who attended from nine till twelve and two till five, and were taught English, writing, and accounts. Mr. John Small, the master, who diligently discharges his duty, is paid £50 per annum. Mrs. Bevis superintends the girls' school, and receives £25 per annum.

Parents desirous of sending their children to the school had to apply to the Guardians, who admitted them at five years of age, and continued their education until they reached the age of 12.

This excellent institution bids fair to confer great benefits upon the neighbourhood, and we may look forward with confidence to a general improvement of the morals and conduct of the lower classes of the community, whose instructions and improvement have been hitherto much neglected.

The Hayling Poorhouse – Quaint Ways of Running It.

Portsmouth Evening News – 22 October 1932



North Terrace, where the poorhouse stood

The Parish of North Hayling, although now very much less in population than the sister parish of South Hayling, was in the earlier history of Hayling Island evidently the more important. A census taken in 1788 gave the population as being considerably the larger of the two parishes. The fact that North Hayling had its own poorhouse, whereas there is no trace of such an institution in South Hayling, seems to point to the same conclusion. The former poorhouse is now a row of picturesque cottages known as North Terrace.

In the year 1834 the parish workhouses were superseded by the Union Workhouses, the Act making the union instead of the parish the unit of local administration. The Havant Board of Guardians then took over the duties formerly carried out by the parish of North Hayling.

The parochial records of North Hayling are in good order from the year 1793, but those previous to this date seem to have been lost. The records show a, monthly meeting, with accounts and minutes kept, signed by the churchwarden and two overseers, and being verified twice a year by two

Justices of the Peace. The income as obtained by making a poor rate and there are many entries such as: *Cost of new book, 4s. (20p). Making book, 1s. (5p)*, but there is no record of clerical work beyond this. If there was a balance in hand, it was stated that the overseers were in pocket so much; if a deficit, that they were out of pocket by so much for the month.

Some items of expenditure are in many instances most interesting. In May, 1796, there is this curious entry: *Paid for the men raised for His Majesty's Navy, £7 8s. 2d. (£7.41)*. One would not expect to find any reference to the County Rate in 1799, but the payment of £5 19s. 6d. (£5.97½p) with stamp 2d. (1p) is so entered, whilst further entries state that the Overseers paid the Vagrants Tax for a similar amount. They also paid: *Joseph Parr's lodgings in the Small-Pox, 10s. 6d. (52½p)* and at a later date there is an entry: *For journey expenses to Fareham for the examination of the same man, 18s. 9d. (94p)*, evidently to satisfy the authorities that he had recovered.

James Guy was paid for relief, and for 'doctor's stuff,' 3s. 6d. (17½p). Another entry is: *For going to the Crowner, 2s. (10p)*, and on the same date: *For burying a man, 2s. (10p)*. On another occasion: *1 gallon of beer for master Aldent's burial*. There appears to be some connexion between the entries which follow each other: *Beer and Hollands to Peter Brown, 5s. 9d. (29p). Paid the Clerk for digging Phebe Brown's grave, 2s. 6d. (12½p)*. Did the distracted widower require stimulating? Another curious entry is on one line without any stops. It reads: *Dame Renolds to bury her child 3s. 6d. (17½ p) yeast 3 pence 3s. 9d. (19p)*.

Burying appears to have been a thirsty job. Here is another entry:

Paid Mr. Bagley for burying of Sarah Patte 1s 9d. (9p) and one gallon of beer 1s. 4d. (7p) Mrs Pilling was paid 6s. (30p) for making a shroud, and Siam Lamar 5s. (25p) for digging two graves, whilst Mr Cutler was paid 12s 6d. (62½ p) for making two coffins.

Food purchases naturally occupy considerable space in the records. Pork must have been a prominent item in the menu, judging by the repeated purchase of fat hogs, some weighing over 22 score (440lb – 200kg), the price ranging from 8s. 6d. (42½p) per score. Pigs were evidently kept at the poorhouse, there being several entries of the purchase of pens for the

poorhouse hog. One entry runs: *Killing a hog, with a man to help cost 4s. (20p)*, whilst 1s. 6d. (7½p) was allowed: *For going to see a hog*, evidently with a view to purchase. Occasionally there was beef, one entry being: *21 pounds bull beef and half head 5s. 4½d. (27p)*. Another item, which showed that the churchwarden sometimes did business with the house: *Paid myself for ½ cwt. and 4 pounds cheese 12s. 10d. (64p)*. Lard was 6d. (2½p) a pound, and butter 1s 4d. (7p).

The pay for work seems very little compared with our present-day standards. A day's work in the poorhouse garden was 1s. 4d. (7p). Dame Barber was paid: *3s. (15p) a week for nursing Ben Grist's wife, cutting 200 bundles furze was paid for with 7s. (35p)*. Dame Couzens, for her day's washing was paid: *1s. 6d. (7½ p) and leasing 18 bushels of wheat 15s. (75p)*.

Relief in cash was entered as: *Let Dame Alwick have 2s. (10p). Let Old James Vick have 4s. (20p). Paid Ben Grout's wife 5 weeks at 2s. (10p)*. Boarding-out prices seem quite fantastic compared with those of to-day. Thus: *Paid Master Bird for keeping Josiah Lomar 11 weeks 11s. (55p)*. From another entry it evidently appears that the man had shifted his lodgings, as Master Reed was paid a similar sum. Farmer Kewell was paid: *£1 1s. 6d. (£1.7½p) for keeping Bill Chambers three weeks, and John Rogers £1 7s. 6d. (£1.37½p) for keeping Susanah Holt 55 weeks*. On January 18, 1807, on a page by itself, duly signed by the parish officials, is an entry as follows:

At a Vestry meeting in the Parish Church it was agreed that the allowance of 8s. (40p) a week to Richard Parr and his wife should be continued on the following terms, that they were to support themselves without any other aid from the parish.

Was this the forerunner of the present-day 'Means Test'?

In the Workhouse – Christmas Day

George Robert Sims



George Robert Sims was a Fleet Street journalist, and when he wrote this poem in 1903 it was immediately acclaimed throughout the English speaking world.

It is a rich, ripe slice of Edwardian melodrama. But Sims wrote it as a ballad of protest, presenting a heart-breaking picture of life as lived by what they called 'the lower orders' at the turn of the century.

It is Christmas Day in the Workhouse,
And the cold, bare walls are bright
With garlands of green and holly,
And the place is a pleasant sight;
For with clean-washed hands and faces,
In a long and hungry line
The paupers sit at the table,
For this is the hour they dine.

And the guardians and their ladies,
Although the wind is east,
Have come in their furs and wraps,
To watch their charges feast;
To smile and be condescending,
Put pudding on pauper plates.
To be hosts at the Workhouse banquet
They've paid for – with the rates.

Oh, the paupers are meek and lowly
With their "Thank'ee kindly, mum's!"
So long as they fill their stomachs,
What matter it whence it comes!
But one of the old men mutters,
And pushes his plate aside:
"Great God!" he cries, "but it chokes me!
For this is the day she died!"

The guardians gazed in horror,
The Master's face went white;
"Did a pauper refuse the pudding?"
"Could their ears believe aright?"
Then the ladies clutched their husbands,
Thinking the man would die,
Struck by a bolt, or something,
By the outraged One on high.

But the pauper sat for a moment,
Then rose 'mid silence grim,
For the others had ceased to chatter
And trembled in every limb.
He looked at the guardians' ladies,
Then, eyeing their lords, he said,
"I eat not the food of villains
Whose hands are foul and red:

"Whose victims cry for vengeance
From their dark, unhallowed graves."
"He's drunk!" said the Workhouse Master,
"Or else he's mad and raves."
"Not drunk or mad," cried the pauper,
"But only a haunted beast,
Who, torn by the hounds and mangled,
Declines the vulture's feast.

"I care not a curse for the guardians,
And I won't be dragged away;
Just let me have the fit out,
It's only on Christmas Day
That the black past comes to goad me,
And prey on my burning brain;
I'll tell you the rest in a whisper –
I swear I won't shout again.

"Keep your hands off me, curse you!
Hear me right out to the end.
You come here to see how paupers
The season of Christmas spend;
You come here to watch us feeding,
As they watched the captured beast.
Here's why a penniless pauper
Spits on your paltry feast.

"Do you think I will take your bounty,
And let you smile and think
You're doing a noble action
With the parish's meat and drink?
Where is my wife, you traitors –
The poor old wife you slew?
Yes, by the God above me,
My Nance was killed by you!

'Last winter my wife lay dying,
Starved in a filthy den;
I had never been to the parish –
I came to the parish then.
I swallowed my pride in coming,
For ere the ruin came,
I held up my head as a trader,
And I bore a spotless name.

"I came to the parish, craving
Bread for a starving wife,
Bread for the woman who'd loved me
Through fifty years of life;
And what do you think they told me,
Mocking my awful grief,
That 'the House' was open to us,
But they wouldn't give 'out relief'.

"I slunk to the filthy alley –
'Twas a cold, raw Christmas Eve –
And the bakers' shops were open,
Tempting a man to thief;
But I clenched my fists together,
Holding my head awry,
So I came to her empty-handed
And mournfully told her why.

"Then I told her the house was open;
She had heard of the ways of that,
For her bloodless cheeks went crimson,
and up in her rags she sat,
Crying, 'Bide the Christmas here, John,
We've never had one apart;
I think I can bear the hunger –
The other would break my heart.'

"All through that eve I watched her,
Holding her hand in mine,
Praying the Lord and weeping,
Till my lips were salt as brine;
I asked her once if she hungered,
And as she answered 'No' ,
T'he moon shone in at the window,
Set in a wreath of snow.

"Then the room was bathed in glory,
And I saw in my darling's eyes
The faraway look of wonder
That comes when the spirit flies;
And her lips were parched and parted,
And her reason came and went.
For she raved of our home in Devon,
Where our happiest years were spent.

"And the accents, long forgotten,
Came back to the tongue once more.
For she talked like the country lassie
I woo'd by the Devon shore;
Then she rose to her feet and trembled,
And fell on the rags and moaned,
And, 'Give me a crust – I'm famished –
For the love of God!' she groaned.

"I rushed from the room like a madman
And flew to the Workhouse gate,
Crying, 'Food for a dying woman!'
And the answer came, 'Too late.'
They drove me away with curses;
Then I fought with a dog in the street
And tore from the mongrel's clutches
A crust he was trying to eat.

"Back through the filthy byways!
Back through the trampled slush!
Up to the crazy garret,
Wrapped in an awful hush;
My heart sank down at the threshold,
And I paused with a sudden thrill.
For there, in the silv'ry moonlight,
My Nance lay, cold and still.

"Up to the blackened ceiling,
The sunken eyes were cast –
I knew on those lips, all bloodless,
My name had been the last;
She called for her absent husband –
O God! had I but known! –
Had called in vain, and, in anguish,
Had died in that den – alone.

"Yes, there, in a land of plenty,
Lay a loving woman dead,
Cruelly starved and murdered
for a loaf of the parish bread;
At yonder gate, last Christmas,
I craved for a human life,
You, who would feed us paupers,
What of my murdered wife!"

"There, get ye gone to your dinners,
Don't mind me in the least,
Think of the happy paupers
Eating your Christmas feast;
And when you recount their blessings
In your smug parochial way,
Say what you did for me, too,
Only last Christmas Day."



A postcard illustration of Christmas Day in the workhouse



The workhouse being demolished in 1947. The former police station and court room can be seen behind. The only fragments that remain are sections of boundary wall on the eastern and western sides of the site. Until about 2005 the old mortuary was used as a trading store by the Havant Horticultural Society. *Photo The News.*



The site of the workhouse is now occupied by an attractive development of flats named 'Longcroft'. They provide a far more comfortable standard of living to that experienced by previous 'residents' here.



Not Havant but a typical view of workhouse inmates



The former Emsworth Poorhouse in North Street



The Havant Workhouse bell in Havant Museum



Printed by Park Design & Print
Part of Park Community Enterprises
Established to give young people real life work experience.
Educating and Inspiring Young People.
023 9248 9840 pdp@pcs.hants.sch.uk